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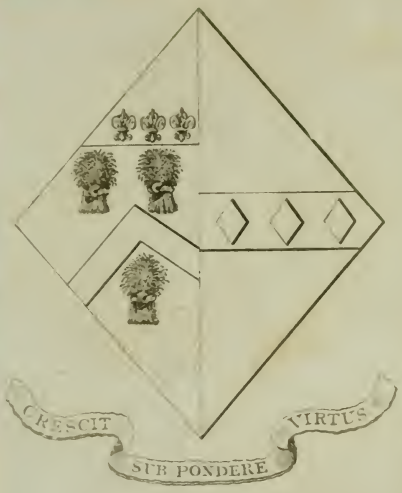
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MY LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"STORIES OF WATERLOO," "WILD SPORTS OF THE WEST,"
&c. &c. &c.

Sir Anthony.—Come here, sirrah! who the devil are you?
Captain Absolute.—'Faith! sir, I'm not quite clear myself: but I'll endeavour to recollect.

The Rivals.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

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MY LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

THE STAGE-COACH.—THE CYNIC AND THE ROUÉ.

In Ephesus I am but two hours old ;
As strange unto your town as to your talk.
Comedy of Errors.

Morning had not dawned, when the carriage came to the door to convey me to a neighbouring village, where I should meet the stage-coach. Having already secured a seat, I transferred my person and effects into "the leathern conveniency," and found therein two passengers, a lady and her protector. The sickly lamp-light prevented me seeing anything but the persons of my companions; and as they were sleepy, and I occupied with my own thoughts, none of us evinced a wish to be com-

municative, and we rolled over the first three stages as silently as if we had been denizens of La Trappe.

We stopped at the fourth inn, and the waiter intimated that "here we breakfasted." This announcement appeared to rouse the energies of all: the gentleman disencumbered himself of cloak and night-cap—handed his companion to the parlour—I followed, and found the travellers unmuffled, and ready for their morning repast.

I was struck at first sight by the lady's appearance: though past the middle age, she was remarkably attractive, and in youth had no doubt been beautiful. She was tall, graceful, *distinguée*, and her manners bore the stamp of fashion. Although in her air there was the decided coquetry of a Frenchwoman, it was mingled with a shade of melancholy that in me created for the fair stranger an additional interest. She hastily examined me from head to foot, and I was vain enough to think that my outward man found favour in her sight.

Her protector looked like a foreign *militaire*. He too was handsome, and appeared about the

same age as his companion: yet, with a pleasing exterior, there was something coarse and repulsive in his manners; and the expression of his countenance was decidedly bad. I remarked that he never looked one in the face; and, from the first moment of our acquaintance, I rather felt an inclination to dislike him. From his dark moustache and soldierly carriage, I was persuaded that he was a brother of the sword;—indeed, had I doubted his profession, the lady would have removed uncertainty on that score, by asking "the colonel" for her reticule.

The fair traveller entered freely into conversation, and before breakfast ended we were on excellent terms. I learned from her, that she was returning to her native country from the Continent, where she had made a long sojourn. She had moved, no doubt, in excellent society, to judge from the elegance of her manners, as well as the known fashion of those whom she spoke of as being her intimate friends. I thought she sometimes looked at me with a peculiar expression; and when she removed her eyes I heard her sigh heavily. Did not the image of

my absent love engross me wholly, the interest I had created in the strange beauty would have been flattering, and ascribed by vanity to a different cause from that which probably occasioned it.

It was twilight when we stopped in Piccadilly; and here we separated,—they for a family hotel in Leicester-square, and I for my former quarters in Berners-street. While the colonel's luggage was being exchanged into a hackney-coach, he personally inspected its removal, and the lady and I of course were left together. Observing that her husband was occupied, in a low and hurried tone she asked me for my card. What could she want with my address? How could I tell? I gave it,—shook hands with her,—bade the colonel "Good-bye,"—hoped that we should meet again,—and we started for our respective abodes.

Had my heart been disengaged, I might have plumed myself on the conquest I had achieved. Undoubtedly, my coach companion was a woman of uncommon personal attractions: her regard for me was flattering — my success certain;—for, Cæsar-like, I had con-

quered at first sight. Yet it was a curious circumstance that I did not know the name of my Dulcinea: they were travelling in strict incognito, and the colonel had sunk his title "for the nonce;" for his baggage was ticketed with the unpresuming name of "Johnson," preceded by a simple "Mr." Well, no doubt time would discover who my inamorata was; and in that hope I sat down to dinner with a traveller's appetite.

As I sipped my wine, I know not why it was, but recollections of my quondam friend Edwards, of "the Rainbow," haunted my memory; and at times doubts of the respectability of Colonel Johnson and his companion arose. But the appearance of both, and more particularly the lady, removed these apprehensions; and although it was unusual for persons of superior fashion to travel in a public carriage, and unattended by a servant of either sex, still there might be reasons with which I was unacquainted, sufficient to extenuate the crime of wayfaring in a stage-coach. From these speculations I turned to considerations of greater moment,—namely, how I was to proceed in obtaining the information of

Sedley's character and circumstances which it was so necessary should be procured.

Never did man need counsel more. I was a stranger,—knew nobody in town who could assist me; and so ignorant of the localities of London, that if I had to call in the next street, I would require a guide to direct me to it. Indeed, the whole business appeared so difficult, that I half determined to abandon it as hopeless—denounce Sedley to my grandfather, and tell him what I had learned from Phœbe of his profligacy. What then?—would he condemn his ward unheard, and, on bare assertions of his unworthiness, discard his old friend's son? No; the attempt would fail, and a crisis be precipitated that might ruin Emily and me. Unable to decide on any course of conduct that promised reasonable chances of success, I had no alternative but to trust all to fortune.

I remembered that the packet I had been entrusted with required an immediate delivery, called a coach, and set off to Lincoln's-inn-fields, where the old man's solicitor resided.

Although the evening was far advanced, I found Mr. Stanley at home, and busy in his pri-

vate office. I was immediately admitted, and graciously received. Opening the packet, he glanced hastily over the instructions it contained, and told me that next morning Mr. Harrison's wishes should be attended to. After some general conversation, and very minute inquiries touching the old gentleman's health, he asked me how long I had been in town. I told him.

"God bless me!" he exclaimed; "your arrival at Long's on Wednesday, was mentioned in the morning papers."

"Indeed! that is remarkable: they have anticipated my visit by two days."

"Mr. Sedley showed it to me in 'The Morning Post,'" said the solicitor.

"The statement is nevertheless in every way a false one. My hotel is in 'Berners,' and not 'Bond' street."

The conversation dropped. Mr. Stanley took my address; I bade him good night, and we parted.

I strolled leisurely westward, and reached Covent-garden as the clock was striking ten. To fill up a heavy hour, I turned into one of the

numerous taverns which surround the market, and ensconced myself in a corner box, from whence, unseen myself, I could observe the several parties that occupied the tables of the coffee-room.

At the nearest two persons were seated; and to judge from the earnest manner of him who was placed opposite me, their conversation was interesting.

The speaker was a remarkable man; tall, slight, gentlemanly, and well-looking. Though young, his hair was grizzled, and the cast of his countenance dejected and care-worn. His dress was indifferent; and though each garment was fashionably cut, the whole was of showy and ill-assorted colours. A morning frock was united to full-dress trousers — woollen mits assorted badly with a velvet waistcoat—while his spotted neckcloth was at total variance with the light shoes he wore, and which bore evident marks of having recently traversed dirty streets—a duty for which they never had been designed. In short, the whole appearance of the stranger was "shabby genteel," and I wrote him down at once a "ruined gentleman."

I watched him attentively. His story was no doubt an affecting one, for at times his manner was vehement and impassioned, and more than once I saw a tear glisten on his cheek. Presently he rose, took his hat, and I observed that his friend presented him with a bank-note, which after some slight scruples he pocketed, and then withdrew.

His companion did not remain long after; he rang the bell, called a waiter, and discharged the bill. I was rather curious to see the face of one whose liberality I had just witnessed. He stopped to look at the clock; and when he turned round for a moment, I recognized in the humane stranger, my Mentor of the militia—the cynic Aylmer! He had quitted the coffee-room, but I overtook him at the door.

"Pardon me, sir; I believe I speak to Captain Aylmer?"

"*Mister*, if you please,"—said my quondam counsellor; "my military career is ended;—captains have overstocked the market—the name now-a-days, does not even answer for travelling,—the title is a drug—and were there honour in it, I am too old to be ambitious."

The dry and caustic manner of my ancient counsellor was marked more strongly, even than when he aided in my deliverance from matrimony at country-quarters. He continued.

"May I inquire who it is addresses me? as I neither recollect your figure or voice."

"This is very possible. But admitting that I might not be fortunate enough to claim a personal acquaintance, would not the introduction of an old and valued friend be a sufficient apology for intruding on you?"

"Humph!" said the cynic. "Friends, sir, are so few with me, that I feel some anxiety to know who this valued gentleman may be."

"Captain O'Moore, probably, will be acknowledged by that title," I returned.

"Philip O'Moore is dead," Aylmer answered coldly, — "'*Nil de mortuis*,'— you know the adage, and the less said of him the better."

"Ah! I did not hear of your poor friend's death," said I. "Would Captain Daly's recommendation be more efficient?"

"Sir," said the cynic gruffly, "if your passports are similar, allow me to bid you a good evening."

"Bless me!" I exclaimed, "how soon 'auld lang syne' is forgotten! Well, friendship fails, it seems;—a softer tie — a lovelier name, may serve the purpose. Would Miss Lucinda, that 'best of daughters,' do?"

"Now," cried the cynic, with unfeigned astonishment, "who the devil are you?"

"Am I too forgotten?—*me*, your quondam disciple, who, but for your evil counsel, might have been 'Benedict the married man,' and the happy father of a young and interesting progeny?"

Aylmer stopped before a lighted window, and examined my features with attention.

"By Heaven! it is himself," he exclaimed. "Boy—but *boy* I must term you no longer, for yours are the deeds of manhood;—I have met you when I wished it——"

"And I required it most."

"Humph!" said the cynic suspiciously.

"Yes; I never needed a friend's assistance more."

"Pecuniary, I presume," said Aylmer, "if one may judge from your exploits on Moulsey Hurst, and your success in Jermyn-street. You

promised to profit by my parting advice; and how have you redeemed that pledge?—by consorting with vagabonds to patronize a bruising-match, where you were sold; and winning money in a hell by risking ruin, to lavish it upon the most worthless Jezebel that ever destroyed a dupe!"

I stared: here was a voluminous accusation—numerous in its counts as an indictment for high treason.

"What does the man mean?" I exclaimed. "Are you drunk or crazy, Aylmer?"

"Neither," said the cynic: "the madness, I suspect, lies with you. But how can you want money at this moment? I know you were cleaned out upon the Heath, as the ruffians call it; but you won seven hundred this morning, and surely Pauline has not sacked it all?"

"Seven hundred devils!"

"Ay, seven hundred pounds at billiards," replied the cynic.

"Then the table was in a stage-coach."

"The table was in Bury-street. Did you not pass the morning in Goldey's private rooms?"

"No; for I was rumbling in the Manchester Rocket from cockcrow till dinner-hour."

"This is astonishing," said Aylmer. "One question more,—when did you last drive Pauline Le Grande to Richmond in your phaeton?"

"I never had a phaeton in my life; and you may as well ask me when I drove out your grandmother."

"Well, one of us must be mad," he returned. "Here, step into this place, till we decide which be the proper candidate for St. Luke's."

It was a French restaurateur's in Leicester-square: we seated ourselves at a remote table, ordered supper, and over a bottle of wine resumed the conversation.

"And have you not been rioting in and about the metropolis part of last winter, and latterly for a month?"

"I have not been in England quite a week; and of that time, not twenty hours in London," I replied.

"Then," said the cynic, "you should take an action against every newspaper within the bills

of mortality. Why, man, you 'll live in history: your movements have been regularly chronicled, and you figure lithographed in half the print-shops about town. 'The Post' provided you with a mistress; 'The Herald' delivered you a message from her keeper, Sir Henry Harewood; 'The Courier' bound you over to keep the peace; 'Life in London' had you fox-hunting in Northamptonshire; while, in 'The Essex Mercury,' you have miraculously escaped death from the bursting of a gun. Pray, may I ask, are you Jack Blake, *olim* of the —— Militia?"

"Assuredly I am Jack Blake, and formerly an unworthy ensign in that distinguished corps."

"And," said the cynic, "do you not box—drive—carry off *figurantes*?"

"No, no, no: to all and every of these charges, I plead 'Not guilty.'"

"And will you deny that you have been blown up and bound over? Do you not ride, —play—"

"Nothing but piquet," I replied.

"And never, I hope, by moonlight." And

Aylmer and I laughed heartily at old recollections.

"Well, Master Jack Blake, you are to me a perfect puzzle. All that I have told you of your being *éclated* in the newspapers is true."

"I believe it, Aylmer. Part of it I read myself at Stainsbury."

"But," resumed the cynic, "what most confounds me is, that this very evening I had full particulars of the billiard-playing I accused you with, from one of the party who was actually present at the match. Did you observe the person that parted with me at the tavern in Covent-garden?"

"Yes, I particularly noticed him."

"Well, I must tell you who that person is," said Aylmer.

"I should take him to be a reduced gentleman."

"And that he is," said the cynic, "in everything,—looks, character, and fortune. When I was in the Blues, that unhappy man joined the —— Hussars at Brighton. He was the second son of Sir John Evelyn, one of the oldest baronets in Great Britain, and just come into

possession of twenty-five thousand pounds, bequeathed him by a distant relation. Briefly and brilliantly as my ruin was completed, his career was by far a shorter one. In two years he had dissipated his fortune,—lost his commission, —been disinherited by his father,—and married a woman he kept, and old enough to have been his mother. In short, he was an outcast and a blackleg,—disclaimed by his acquaintance, and abandoned by his family. When his last guinea was gone, the wretch his wife, whose beauty was still remarkable, left him in a prison to share the fortunes of a German swindler. Those who had lived upon him for months 'cut him dead,' and one for whom he

> 'Kept his credit with his purse,
> Supported his estate, and paid his men their wages,'

refused his humble application for a pound. Every door was closed against the wretched prodigal — every face averted — and, to save himself from starvation, he has become the *attaché* of a low hell—a decoy to lure unsuspecting idiots to destruction. That it is a sorry calling, his haggard looks and shabby

dress evinces; and he, poor wretch! who once drove with four bays of matchless beauty a *prima donna* in Hyde Park, is roaming through the streets in worn-out dancing-shoes, uncertain where to get a supper, and ignorant of the hole in which he shall find a shelter for the night.

"In better times I knew him: he heard that I had recovered my estate,—for, Jack, I have at last buried 'little Isaac,'—and made me out; and as he could not venture abroad safely by day, he made an appointment to meet me at the coffee-room where you witnessed the close of our interview. It was from Evelyn that I heard of your billiard-match; and also that you were marked by a systematic gang of swindlers for sure and speedy ruin. Is it not strange that this man could be mistaken?"

"In faith, it is, friend Aylmer; and, 'pon my soul! I begin to entertain serious doubts of my own identity. But hear me now, for I have much to tell;—listen, and then advise me."

Accordingly I briefly narrated such passages of my life as it was necessary for him to know, and gave a full detail of the dangerous position in which I found myself placed at present.

"This is indeed a strange tale of yours," said the cynic, when I ended; "and how we should act requires deep consideration. It is late, and time to separate. Come to breakfast here at nine o'clock, and we will then decide on what measures it will be most prudent to adopt."

He gave me his address, and I set him down at private lodgings in a narrow street off the Strand, and then drove home, and safely deposited my person in "mine own inn."

CHAPTER II.

NOTORIETY.—MY COUSIN JACK.

The newspapers! Sir, they are the most villanous—licentious—abominable—infernal. Not that I ever read them;—no; I make it a rule never to look into a newspaper.

The Critic.

Her form had all the softness of her sex,
Her features all the sweetness of the devil.

Don Juan.

I FELT more pleasure than I can describe at my opportune meeting with my old friend Aylmer. He came to my assistance at the crisis of my fate; and, like the good genius of my fortunes, stepped in to save me. None could advise me better;—alive to the villanies of the world, he had not passed through the rough ordeal of adversity without laying its wisdom to his heart. My courage rose,—the blood of

the Blakes warmed in my veins—and, with Aylmer to aid, I felt persuaded I should come off a conqueror, and win the woman that I loved, without losing "a fair inheritance." I went to sleep comparatively happy, and in my dreams knelt with Emily to Mr. Harrison, who joined our hands and gave us his benediction.

I was still thinking of my sweet cousin, when the waiter called me. I dressed, drove to Craven-street, and found Aylmer up and breakfast waiting.

He was perusing a newspaper when I entered; and, with a smile, handed me "The Morning Herald."

"Here you go again, Jack! But for you and the frail countess, who has levanted with the younger brother of a broken-down baronet, the papers, like Shallow's estate, would be 'barren—barren.'"

I stared at him, and then read the following paragraph:—

"The match between Count Strogonoff, the celebrated billiard-player, and Captain Blake, of sporting notoriety, came off yesterday at the

patent table in Goldey's Rooms, in presence of a large and fashionable party. The play on both sides was beautiful, till fortune, for a long time doubtful, at last declared the gallant captain conqueror. Large sums on this occasion changed owners, as the count was freely backed at five to two. The winner, it is said, netted 'a cool thousand.' A new match is spoken of, as the count is not disposed to acknowledge his rival's superiority."

I laid down "The Herald."

"This is too bad, Aylmer."

"It is," said the cynic, "for here you are again;" and he handed me "The Post."

"On-dit.—Le Grande has quarrelled with her Hibernian protector. We have heard the particulars; but, for obvious reasons, and at this stage of the affair, must decline giving them to the world. We shall not say who is in fault; but certainly, if Captain Blake visits the *vocalist* of Drury-Lane at *three o'clock in the morning*, we do think conscientiously, that the fair *artiste* in Curzon-street has reason to be jealous."

"Who can this infernal captain be? What

shall I do, Aylmer? If the fellow continues in town, I must assassinate him, or he will be my ruin."

"Why, faith," said my comforter, "it is provoking. And now that I see you by daylight, the caricatures in the print-shops are most ridiculously like you."

"Then Heaven help me!" I exclaimed. "Have you considered my case, and decided on the course I must pursue?"

"I have lost a night's rest by you," replied Aylmer: "will you be directed by me?"

"I will."

"You promise it!"

"I do: you shall guide me entirely."

"Then," said the cynic, "you must leave your hotel, and content yourself with quiet apartments here. You must be my nephew for a week; and instead of Blake, we'll call you occasionally Aylmer."

"Content! But wherefore is this incognito necessary?"

"Simply that you may, yourself unknown, find out your rival, and ascertain whether he is the *roué* and hypocrite that he is described to

be. We must employ some agents,—one I have already selected,—and if Sedley plays, I'll know it before to-morrow night. The man to effect this is Evelyn: and we will meet him this evening. You shall be my nephew; and ere the week passes I'll make or mar your fortunes."

I dined with Aylmer at the London Coffee-house; and at nine o'clock we left Ludgate-hill for an obscure tavern near Smithfield, where the ruined gambler had appointed a meeting with the cynic. A walk of five minutes through filthy lanes brought us to the place; and beneath a gloomy archway we entered a stable-yard, and turned into "the tap" of the Black Lion. There Evelyn was waiting for us.

He looked at us suspiciously. The cynic named me as his nephew, and he then became unreserved and cheerful. Aylmer, with admirable tact, led him imperceptibly to the subject; and Evelyn volunteered to do what we were so anxious to effect.

"We want some brandy," said the wretched man; and the waiter promptly replenished the

glasses. "What the deuce can you want with this Sedley? Does he hold any of your securities?"

"No matter: it is important that I should know everything about him. We are alone — you asked me for five pounds last night, and I gave it you."

"Well," said the *roué*, "you did."

"Would you earn fifty more?"

Evelyn's eyes glistened.

"Ay, and a week will do it"—said Aylmer: "and to prove my sincerity, here are ten pounds as a retainer."

"Agreed!" cried Evelyn; "I am yours: say what am I to do? But for this supply, I should be supperless."

Aylmer shook his head.

"It is true, by Heaven! I went with your bank-note to a silver hell, and left it this morning without sufficient money to buy my breakfast. Chance gave me a dinner; otherwise I should have met you fasting."

I shuddered as I looked at him. The accursed love of play still fascinated the ruined wretch.

"Do we understand each other?" said the outcast.

"Perfectly," Aylmer replied. "Jack, leave us."—I obeyed, and strolled down the street, while Evelyn received ample instructions.

We parted presently,—the gambler to his vocation, and the cynic and I to our lodgings in Craven-street.

It was but ten o'clock, and Aylmer had some appointment with a solicitor. I left him at the lawyer's house, hurried home, dressed, and, it being opera night, drove to the King's Theatre.

Is there a man who, at twenty-one, has seen that brilliant spectacle for the first time, that will ever forget the splendour of its effect? I never shall. I came in as the second act of "Semiramide" was ending; and, before the ballet commenced, had sufficient time to look around and admire in the boxes all that was beautiful and *distingué*.

It was a fashionable night. The house was full—the pit very crowded; but I crushed myself into a place, and found in my next neighbour a very communicative personage, who appeared to know everything and everybody.

From his accurate knowledge of names and titles, and the frequent use he made of his tablets in taking notes, I concluded he was reporting for a newspaper. To me, when he ascertained that I was a stranger to the town, he was extremely polite; and his information and anecdotes were varied and interesting.

The curtain rose—the ballet commenced, and the music, scenery, and dancing were enchanting. The faery splendour of an Eastern romance was realized in the beautiful spectacle. I gazed with delight on the business of the ballet: a grand procession, and a dance of sylphs, elicited in their turn the plaudits of the spectators. A pause, as if that of expectation, succeeded;—every eye was turned to the stage,—on came the expected one, and a more brilliant *artiste* never executed a *pas seul*.

"Who is that exquisite creature?" I inquired from my obliging neighbour.

"Oh, that is Pauline le Grande. Is not her dancing to-night superb?"

"And can that splendid woman be as worthless as she is described to be?" I asked him.

"There cannot be a more depraved one in existence. Her profligacy and profusion are unbounded: she has ruined more young men than all the *intrigantes* on this establishment. Peers, baronets, bankers—all have had reason to curse her fascinations. She now calls a young Irishman her protector, whom she will first plunder, and then discard."

"And who may this unfortunate victim be?" I inquired.

"I wonder he is not here to-night:" and he looked round the house, and particularly directed his eyes to a lower side-box, where a showy and rather over-dressed gentlewoman of portly dimensions was sitting with a very pretty girl. "Those, sir, are the wife and daughter of an East Indian director; and report says, that Captain Blake is a professed admirer of the younger lady:—before the ballet ends, it is more than probable he will call in there. The girl is an only daughter, and consequently an heiress; but the old indigo-planter will not countenance the addresses of the wildest Irishman upon town. The captain is said

to be of ancient family and good estate; but, Lord, sir! as you and I know, Irish properties are mostly in the moon."

I was all anxiety to see this distinguished countryman of mine who had attained such fashionable celebrity. Who could he be? I ran over every Blake among the tribes; wild ones there were enough, but none that answered to the description given me of the protector of Pauline. The ballet was nearly over, and the bustle of departure commenced; still the East Indian's box was unvisited by any lady-killer like the redoubted captain. I was sadly disappointed. Down came the curtain, and the pit began to thin. My kind neighbour the reporter buttoned his coat, and prepared to move. He had already taken a step or two, when, suddenly stopping, he touched my arm—"Look, sir," he said, "that gentleman is Le Grande's protector."

I turned my eyes where he pointed to, and in the dashing personage who was assisting to shawl the ladies in the director's box, I recognized the well-remembered features of my excellent namesake "Jack the Devil."

I was perfectly confounded. What evil planet had driven him at this time to London? Bright as his career appeared to be at present, I knew that it must be brief in its duration, and miserable in its close. How did he finance? whence obtain supplies to defray the reckless expenditure of his extravagant mode of life? No funds came to him from Galway; for there, alas! all was litigation and distress. The gaming-table must afford him resources—then was he on the brink of ruin. Could he be saved? I had personal difficulties enough to annoy me; but still I must strive to preserve my kinsman from destruction.

I hastened to the piazza to meet him; but was just in time to see him hand a lady to her carriage,—step in himself,—turn into St. James's-square,—and whither then, Heaven alone could tell.

CHAPTER III.

NEW ACQUAINTANCES.—PAULINE LE GRANDE.—THE BARON HARTZMANN.

Joseph.—In short, his dissipation and extravagance exceed anything I ever heard.

Lady S.—Poor Charles!

Joseph.—Ay, poor Charles, indeed. Notwithstanding his extravagance, one cannot help pitying him. I wish it was in my power to be of any essential service to him.

School for Scandal.

When I reached Craven-street, I found Aylmer waiting my arrival impatiently.

"What has detained you? I feared that you had lost your way,—forgotten the street,—eloped with a *danseuse*,— or taken another lesson in piquet, as there is tolerable moonlight."

"All these fears, Aylmer, were groundless. My absence was caused by graver considera-

tions: I have met my other self, and seen the celebrated captain."

"Indeed! who is the delinquent?"

"My uncle's heir,—the head of all the Blakes; and, to use Falstaff's words, known as 'Jack with his familiars — John with his brothers and sisters, if he had any—and Jack the Devil by all Europe.'"

"Was not your own web a tangled one enough," said the cynic, "but this infernal kinsman with the ominous name must figure in to add to our embarrassments?"

"What can be done, Aylmer?"

"Nothing, but leave him to his fate: before a fortnight, he will be shot, married, or safe within the Bench."

"I cannot desert him; and, come what may, I must at least make one effort to extricate him."

"Pshaw!" said Aylmer, "the attempt is idle. He will, no doubt, disgorge his winnings before the week ends; and then how is he to raise the wind? What power has he over the estates? Can he sell, mortgage, or do anything

in that species of security that Israelites delight in,—

"Double-damn'd post-obits?"

"Power enough, I fear, to wreck his fortunes."

"Well, go to him in the morning—you will find him at Long's, or in Curzon-street. If he can leave town, get him off; for another week—nay, another hour may close his history, like that of the thousand-and-one fools who have preceded him in the road to ruin."

"He won't go, I fear."

"Send him from Paris a message from some injured brother,

"To say his sister's feelings are trepanned;"

and, as he is a true gentleman, he'll start by the Dover coach, without stopping to ask particulars."

"And if he prove intractable?"

"Get him into an asylum; swear—and you can do it safely—that he is a lunatic; and, if this won't do, turn anabaptist yourself, and obtain another name.—To bed, Jack! I have

been working for you all the evening;—had an hour's *tête-à-tête* with as great a scoundrel as ever issued a writ—a regular shark, an Old Bailey solicitor;—and to-morrow I have made an appointment with a Bow-street runner."

"Villanous company," I whispered.

"Ay; but, like other nuisances, society requires them.—'Good-b'ye.'" He took his candle, and I followed the example, and sought a sleepless pillow.

A grey, misty, unhealthy morning broke my uneasy slumbers. I rose, dressed, and descended to the drawing-room, where Aylmer had been for some time expecting me.

"You are a sluggard, Jack! For breakfast now, and then for business. I have been considering our delicate position, and I would propose a division of labour. I will undertake to manage your affairs, if you will only engage to regulate the movements of Jack the Devil."

"Agreed. I think I can do anybody's business better than my own, and——"

"I'll bet an opera-ticket, notwithstanding, that I shall be called upon to redeem some 'false cast' within twenty hours."

"Done! I am more cautious than you will give me credit for being."

"Then we do not meet till evening," said Aylmer. "I have not looked over the morning papers, and am in ignorance whether you occupy a paragraph or two, as is 'your wont.' You are safe, I fancy, for this turn. Not a line—your name not even dragged into a dinner-party. Stop! egad, here you go! Why, what a hopper you must be!"

"A hopper!"

"Yes;—sixty yards in fifty hops, and won by seventeen inches and a quarter. Lord! man, you are coining! A wager between you and Lord Lorimer, for one hundred, p. p. Why, El Dorado is nothing to Cockayne! Could you instruct a friend? But no—I am too stiff to hop."

I was desperately mortified. Again in print, and more ridiculous — I, a sober personage, hopping for hundreds!

"And now, Jack," said the cynic gravely, "either you or the hopper must abdicate. The town is not large enough for both; and if you hope to succeed with your grandfather, and

gain his ward, despatch your infernal friend forthwith to Paris, Rome, Kamschatka,—any place he will go to. If he remains here, the game is gone, and you are but ‘ a lost priest.’”

He was right : Jack would ruin a regiment. We separated,—Aylmer on a secret mission connected with my affair, and I to unkennel the heir of Castle Blake—if that were possible.

At Long’s he was not, nor had been since he dressed for the opera on the preceding evening. I slipped the waiter a crown, and asked him where I should be most likely to find the gallant captain. He smiled, and whispered that at N°. —, Curzon-street, I should be certain to make him out.

Thither I drove —knocked—was let in, and demanded of a footman six feet high, with aiguillettes large and rich enough for a staff-officer, whether Captain Blake was at home. He bowed, simpered, said that he would inquire, and asked me for a card. I told him I had forgotten my ticket-case, and he disappeared.

The house was small but very elegant ; and as I waited in the hall for the domestic’s return—

who, from the unpresuming appearance of my equipage, was of course in no hurry back—I had time to contrast my last and present visits to my worthy kinsman. In Dublin, I found him domesticated with a dress-maker; in London, the favourite of the first *figurante* of the day; and I fancied that but for the honour of the thing, Jack the Devil would have been just as safe with Miss Lightbody as Mademoiselle Pauline Le Grande.

At last, he with the aiguillettes reappeared, and signalled me to follow him. I ascended the stairs, entered the drawing-room, and, extended upon a sofa and wrapped in his flowered silk dressing-gown, found my uncle's heir-apparent, and the representative of all the Blakes.

One look satisfied him of my identity: he sprang like a racket-ball upon his feet, and wrung my hand with all the ardour of a brother. Questions and replies touching my unexpected appearance in the Modern Babylon were promptly interchanged, and we sat down together on the sofa.

"I am so overjoyed to see you here, John!"

"I wish, Jack, that I could with any sincerity return the compliment," I replied coldly.

"Did you find me easily?" said my cousin, rather bothered at the dryness of my manner and address.

"There is no difficulty in doing that, Jack, provided a man can read, and has means to procure a newspaper. You are honourably mentioned of late."

"Come, come, John; are you turned saint? I have heard of your own scrapes before you left the militia."

"Yes; there is no doubt that I made myself more than once ridiculous. I called at your hotel, and find you don't sleep there. Pray, is it customary in London for men to have sundry places of abode? But I want you particularly: come with me to my lodgings."

"Where are they?"

"In Craven-street."

"Craven-street!" ejaculated Jack the Devil, and I thought he would have fainted. "Lord! John, don't say that you hang out in such a den; that address upon your card would ruin

you in the *beau monde* past redemption. You must establish yourself at Long's—the Blenheim—the Burlington—in fact, any civilized spot, and cut Craven-street directly."

"But I won't cut Craven-street; so come along."

"Zounds! man, I have not breakfasted yet."

"I'll wait for you—it's only the loss of half an hour: do ring the bell and order up the kettle. You can make tea, can't you? That accomplishment of course you learned in the Galway. How ultra-fashionable you have become!—two o'clock, and no breakfast."

"I was late up last night," said my kinsman. "I am waiting for a friend. I'll introduce you to a charming companion."

"Is he a Connaught man? Do I know him?"

"It is a lady," said Jack, in some confusion.

"Indeed! Miss Lightbody, I presume. She has come to London, then? Corset-making must be a thriving trade, if one may judge of her funds by the furniture of the room."

It was indeed a magnificent apartment: rare

and expensive articles of *virtù*, china of matchless beauty, and vases of exquisite workmanship, covered cabinets and tables of rich *marqueterie*. On the chimneypiece stood a bust of Pauline, executed in Italian marble; and suspended from the opposite wall hung a full-length painting in oil of the *danseuse*, in the character of Calypso—and certainly the goddess never had a lovelier representative. I looked at the splendour of the apartment with a sigh, when I remembered that many a ruined dupe had contributed to this costly display.

"Why, hang it! John, are you become a Goth—a Vandal? France has destroyed you. A corset-maker!—Zounds! man, it's Le Grande; the most dashing *coryphée* in Christendom."

"I won't remain a moment! Are you so totally undone as to be acquainted with that harpy? Jack, Jack! what would Manus Blake feel, did he but know the certain ruin into which his only child was rushing!"

I rose and took my hat; but my retreat was suddenly cut off, for the door opened and Pauline made her *entrée*.

She approached so gracefully, that, for the life

of me, I could not have bolted. I was presented by Jack, and received with smiles. Mechanically I laid my hat aside and resumed my place upon the sofa, and in five minutes ceased to wonder at my cousin's fascination; for, in sooth, Saint Senanus himself could have scarcely looked upon Le Grande with indifference.

Pauline was in the zenith of her beauty—her figure full, voluptuous, and finely-moulded; her face rather expressive than regular, with eyes dark as midnight, and hair black and glossy as the raven's wing. But there was an air of classic elegance in the formation of the head, united to a neck of exquisite proportion, that made the *ensemble* irresistible. Every movement was perfection; and it was impossible to conceive that a creature so admirably formed, could be coarse in her habits, heartless, mercenary, and profligate.

She understood English perfectly: indeed, it was fortunate for Jack that in this she differed from the greater number of foreign *artistes*, for he spoke no language besides his native tongue. It seemed that I had been mentioned to Le Grande, for she claimed me as an acquaintance,

and invited me to Curzon-street that evening, to meet her particular friends Baron Hartzmann and his lady. I hesitated, and was fabricating some probable excuse, when Jack addressed me in Irish.

"For once, John—do, like a decent fellow. If you asked me to go to Pandemonium, you know I would oblige you. Now do: say you will. Come, out with it; and then I'm your man till evening."

I believe that for the first time in her life, Pauline heard "the accents of the mountain tongue."

"Heavens! Blake, what barbarous sounds are these?"

"Irish, my love. Lord! if you but knew the language!"

She smiled — repeated the invitation,— I consented,—Jack whispered to her for a moment apart—and we took our hats and bade Pauline good morning.

"Is my drag waiting?" inquired the friend of the *danseuse* from the gentleman with the aiguillettes.

"Yes, sir,—some time, sir." He bowed us out, and we found at the door a well-appointed

phaeton, with a pair of the best matched greys in London.

"Whose, Jack, is this? A good turn-out, 'faith."

"Glad you like it," as he took the ribands: "it 's mine."

"Yours?"

"Yes, mine. Where shall I drive you to?"

"The Bench."

"Have you any friend there?"

"No; but I shall have one in a day or two."

"Who?"

"Yourself, Jack. I want to secure you comfortable apartments: the place, I hear, is crowded."

"Nonsense, John! D—n it! you are turned croaker," said my cousin. But I saw he coloured deeply at my observations.

"Jack, I am come to speak to you soberly, quietly, seriously. What are the means by which you are to support this ruinous expenditure? Your father, a distressed gentleman, unable to leave his park, and prisoner in an enclosure of some five hundred acres. You are

heir in expectancy to four thousand a-year; and you live already, if your income was an honest one, at half that sum. Jack, have you a hundred in your pocket, and would one thousand pay your debts?—and yet you are barely six weeks on town."

Jack winced. "D—n it, man! stop preaching. Where shall I take you to?"

"Any place you please. The Bench you will visit in good time, and therefore choose another drive. Drop me at the first coach-stand, for *I* have business to attend to, and *you* are a man of *ton*."

"Business," said Jack the Devil; "why, what business can you have?"

"I'll tell you. I received in France a sum of money from a dying man, and promised to execute a trust. That pledge is sacred; and before I attend to my own affairs, the orphan of that luckless soldier must be inquired after. I have told the occurrence to a friend, and he has directed me how to act. This will engage me for the morning,—but we'll dine together, and name your place and time."

"Bravo, John! agreed: but no chop-house,

—no 'two-and-sixpenny' concern,—nothing in the 'cheap and nasty' way."

"I name Long's; and do you order dinner."

"Well, that's honest," said my cousin; "that smacks like good old times. Let us try this French fellow in the Haymarket: that's your man! Gives you a stylish blow-out,—good wines,—capital brandy,—charges high. He's dear, the devil—but he does the thing."

"Very well, Jack; at six we meet at Lauriston's. Here, this is Conduit-street; set me down; we're at a coach-stand."

Jack the Devil hesitated a little, found courage, and proceeded. "Zounds! John, you must get something private; this jarvey work won't do."

"I think I know where I shall get a carriage cheap."

"Eh! where? Let me see it. Is it new,—natty?"

"You know it;—quite the thing,—fit to sport a *figurante* in to Richmond."

"Have I seen it?"

"Yes. I shall have a bargain."

"That's the thing: where is it to be had, John?"

"When you are done up regularly, Jack, I'll bid for the greys; and of course you'll give a friend the preference."

He smiled, but looked uncomfortable. "Remember six," he said, as I jumped out, and he drove on.

I went to the solicitor to whom Aylmer had recommended me, and gave him instructions to find out Murphy's child; called afterwards with my agents, purchased a rose-diamond ring, and enclosed it in a long letter to my beloved Emily. Time flies fast in London, and when I had dressed and driven to the restaurateur's, it wanted but a few minutes to seven.

Jack was waiting for me; and, to escape my jobations and avoid a *tête-à-tête*, he had invited a gentleman to dine with us, whom he introduced to me as Baron Hartzmann. From the first moment of our acquaintance I bestowed upon the baron my personal dislike: he was a slight, miserable, dwarfish foreigner, greatly over-dressed; his face hidden in hair, his fingers

sparkling with gems, and his breast decorated with a foreign order. In his manner he was cringing and obsequious, with an eternal smile, a ready compliment, and all the pliability requisite for a finished *chevalier d'industrie*. His conversation was common-place; but Jack declared him in a whisper to be not only a fashionable, but a very "honourable man."

In his selections from the restaurateur's *carte*, my kinsman had displayed excellent judgment. The dinner was capital, the wines fair, and Jack in high spirits: all went off well, and the bottle circulated merrily. The evening wore away,— the third flask of Lafitte vanished,— the clock struck ten, and the baron reminded us of our engagement in Curzon-street. We called a bill, got a coach, drove off to Pauline's;—Jack regularly screwed; I comfortable enough; and the baron sober as a judge, and for the best reason—he was a water-drinker, as gamblers generally are.

CHAPTER IV.

PAULINE'S PARTY, AND A BLOW-UP.

Laura was blooming still; had made the best
Of time; and time return'd the compliment,
And treated her genteelly.

Beppo.

Hotspur.— I will ease my heart,
Although it be with hazard of my head.
North.—What! drunk with choler? Stay, and pause awhile.

King Henry IV.

The drawing-room which I had visited in the morning was splendidly lighted up, and the beautiful *danseuse* ready to receive us. If she was dangerously attractive when I saw her at the breakfast-table, now she was irresistible, for all that art could do to heighten the effect of her charms was done. Her dress was magnificent, her jewels costly—and, but for my perfect

knowledge of her unworthiness, I should have thought Pauline one of the most exquisite specimens of Nature's handiwork that this world had ever produced.

There were two personages already in the room: one, a young and handsome Guardsman, whose air, dress, and conversation bespoke him of the highest caste. He claimed Jack as an old companion, was introduced to me, and seemed on intimate terms with Pauline. To the other I was formally presented by our hostess as Madame la Baronne Hartzmann.

The baroness did not speak English; the Guardsman was flirting with Pauline; I was consequently obliged to be agreeable to the lady, and of course commenced a *tête-à-tête;* while Jack and the little foreigner retreated to a corner of the room, and sat down to "humbug," as they call two-handed whist in Galway.

Had not the *figurante* been beside her, the baroness would have been reckoned positively handsome; but Pauline's presence reduced her sadly in the scale of beauty. Madame had never in personal attractions been comparable in her brightest days to the *danseuse*, and she

was at least older by ten years; but still she was a fine woman. Her manners were bold and careless; and, if one might judge by her conversation, her morals rather questionable. She sang and played divinely: I, of course, did duty at the piano; the Guardsman was devoted to the *danseuse;* Jack and the baron entirely engrossed in "humbug;" and after madame had sung herself hoarse, she kindly offered to teach me *écarté.* What could I do? Nothing but accept the offer; and we too, of course, took up a position in a corner, and the baroness commenced her elementary instructions in that interesting and fashionable game.

I have been stupid from the cradle—and as I seldom remembered to mark the king, and revoked continually, no wonder, although we played but for a bagatelle, that the baroness, during my initiatory progress, netted twenty pounds. I tired of *écarté,* and, after a *petit souper*, determined to be off. Jack was a winner, and had no fancy for abdicating; the soldier was a late man, and appeared quite satisfied in doing the sentimental with Pauline. The baroness and myself, therefore, were the

only rational people of the party, and as she complained of fatigue, her husband entreated me to see his lady home; a request, of course, which I readily assented to.

We drove to the baron's lodgings in Regent-street, and were let in by a sleepy-looking maid. Madame had offered me the music of a song that I had admired; and, to do her justice, she seemed most anxious to redeem her pledge,—and if I would but assist her to look through a portfolio, she would find it in a minute. The servant brought lighted candles, and left us; but to hunt out music is sometimes a tedious business—I am sure we must have passed it over a dozen times, for it was a long time before we found the song.

It was striking three as I hurried homewards. Passing through Coventry-street, two persons turned a corner so suddenly, that a smart collision was the consequence; and the footway being narrow, one of them was thrown upon the pavement, and the other forced against a shop-window. An angry discussion ensued: I apologized for the accident; but the more that I endeavoured to persuade them that the mischance

was unpremeditated, the more violent their wrath became. At last, the stouter of the two became so gross in his abuse, that I lost all self-command and knocked him over. A noisy brawl ended in a demand for my address; and, without consideration, I was foolish enough to give a card: in truth, I was anxious to be off, and apprehensive of being accommodated with a lodging in the watch-house. But I ran little risk; the guardians of the night were too sensitive of the value of character to be found abroad when people of good morals are supposed to be asleep, and I escaped the penalty of my rashness.

Aylmer was waiting for me.

"May I inquire, Master John Blake," said the cynic, "where you have put in the night? No doubt in most agreeable society, or you would not have borrowed so liberally from the small hours of the morning."

"Surely, Aylmer," I replied, "you have not waited for me?"

"In good truth, no: I have had a long and intricate account to investigate, so ingeniously obscured by an attorney, that my Job-like pa-

tience almost gave way. But come, let me have your adventures, and those of your relative, the worthy gentleman with the alarming *sobriquet*."

I told him all the particulars of Pauline's party, and omitted nothing but my having been in a street-row.

"Why then, Master John Blake, I grieve to say that you have spent an evening in but indifferent company, and that too upon your own showing. Of that vile dancer you know my opinion already;—your cousin is an ass—a dupe;—the Guardsman, one of the innumerable butterflies that flutter on an idle town;—the baron a professional swindler, whose title is mere moonshine, and his order conferred upon him by—himself;—the lady is a travelling companion—some fourth-rate *chanteuse*, whose voice and reputation are equally broken and bad;—your own portrait I leave to be painted by yourself—and now you have the whole of the *dramatis personæ*. Considering the company you have been in, I think you have come off cheaply; although you have found *écarté* a more expen-

sive game than *piquet;* for the baroness is too industrious to lose her time, like Lucinda Daly, in playing for kisses. Let me see, how stands the account?—you have had supper and a sheet of music, and all for twenty pounds—it is dog cheap certainly. But, what! had you and Madame Hartzmann a romping-match, or a set-to? there is blood upon your glove."

I looked. Aylmer was right, and in the late skirmish I had slightly cut my hand. It was useless to conceal the thing from my privy counsellor, and I told him the particulars.

"This, Jack, was a very silly affair. I thought you were too prudent to brawl in the streets."

I pleaded the provocation given.

"Pshaw! nonsense! If men in London noticed every drunken scoundrel whom they meet, their lives would be a continued scene of quarrelling. Then your folly in giving the fellows your card: the chances are one hundred to one that they are persons no gentleman could meet. I wonder at your simplicity! you require a Mentor as much as Jack the Devil.

But his course is run; and he has been regularly cleaned out at that Jezebel's in Curzon-street."

"No; he had won fifty before I left."

"Precisely so: the common course adopted by all gentlemen of the baron's profession. A Greek invariably allows the pigeon to win, before he turns to and plucks him bare. The whole thing was settled between the parties, and the *figurante* and the swindler will divide the spoil. You were in the way, and it was necessary to get rid of you: you would have interrupted Hartzmann's game, and spoiled Pauline's flirtation. Nothing could have been more discreetly managed; and *madame la baronne* was the decoy-duck. Well, Jack, if poor Emily knew the trouble you took to find the song, or the old boy could have peeped into Curzon-street,——But I am sleepy; and after the pleasant and profitable adventures you have gone through, I suppose your own pillow will be acceptable." We parted.

But mine was fated to be a brief repose. I had not been in bed three hours, when a loud knocking at the street-door awoke me. Before

it was possible for a servant to answer the impatient visitor, another peal thundered through the house. I thought I recognized my cousin's voice, and scarcely had time to put on my dressing-gown, before a hasty step rushed up the stairs, and by different doors, and at the same moment, Jack and I entered the drawing-room.

Morning had broken; and though the light was misty and imperfect, I started two paces back when I viewed my kinsman's countenance. Every line, every feature was distorted with rage: the lip trembled with passion; the veins were corded on the forehead; the brows had contracted till they united, and he seemed the very picture of fury and despair.

"Good God! Jack, what misfortune has occurred?"

He remained speechless. I advanced, took his hand, placed him on a chair, and seated myself beside him. Again I repeated my question. Jack paused, winced, and with an unearthly laugh replied,

"Nothing, John, nothing but what occurs to idiots daily. I am ruined—that's all!"

"Ruined, Jack! How?—speak."

"Ay, ruined! Lost every guinea I had on earth, and a thousand into the bargain."

"What, Jack! to that swindling foreigner?"

"Just so, John. After you left us, the noble baron did me to a turn. The money——"

"Hang the money, Jack!" I exclaimed; "I have some hundreds at——"

"D—n the money! that's not the thing. But to be—hell and furies! I cannot name it—deceived, deserted, robbed——" And he sprang wildly from the chair. "I'll knock the scoundrel's brains out,—pull down the house,—proclaim that strumpet's villany,—and shoot the smooth-faced hypocrite, whom but yesterday I saved from prison!" And, in a tornado of passion, he stamped upon the floor like a maniac. The noise had brought down the cynic, and he united his efforts with mine to calm the distracted dupe.

"Jack, my dear fellow," I said imploringly, "do be patient."

"Patient, John! don't name the word. Did you but know what has occurred, you would not ask me to be patient."

"Come," said Aylmer, as he judiciously struck another chord, "I see how things are. You have been plundered. What boots idle lamentation? If you have been wronged, you must revenge it."

"Right, my brave fellow! Ay, that is the counsel I shall follow. Revenge! there 's sweetness in the very sound!" and his eyes lightened. "Come, I will be calm — quiet as a woman. Sit down; I 'll tell you all."

We obeyed him.

"You may remember, Jack, when you kindly took charge of the baroness,"—and he tried to force a smile,—"I was then a winner. From the moment you left us, luck deserted me entirely, and the cards came at the baron's call. I lost rapidly; some hundreds that I had in my note-case disappeared; but the scoundrel pressed me to play on, and I madly consented. At last we stopped — I *minus* one thousand pounds, for which Hartzmann took an acknowledgment. Soon after, having finished a flask of champagne, in a blessed frame of mind I bade Pauline 'Good night.' The baron having procured a coach, embarked in it with my friend

Captain Neville, whom he had undertaken to set down.

" I walked off rapidly in an opposite direction, and, from the agitation of my mind, turned a wrong corner. How many streets I wandered through, I cannot guess; but after rambling for half an hour, I found myself once more in Curzon-street; and, judge my astonishment at observing a hackney-coach stop at Pauline's house, and the baron and captain alight! They were instantly admitted without knocking, and the door was shut.

" The villany of the whole party was now apparent,—the truth flashed upon me instantly; and though hell was raging in my breast, I had cunning enough not to break upon them prematurely. I waited for ten minutes, and then, with a private key, let myself in, and ascended the stairs unnoticed. No wonder that my intrusion was unobserved—the footman was with Pauline and the baron in the drawing-room partitioning my bank-notes, and Captain Neville coolly undressing in the lady's boudoir!

" As I looked upon the party from the landing-place, my first impulse was to annihilate

them all. I felt a demon's fury and a giant's strength: odds in number was nothing — the footman was a formidable fellow, but Neville was a dandy, Hartzmann a dwarf. Like a Malay running muck, I sprang into the drawing-room. Pauline screamed,— the footman showed fight, but I drove him before me to the lobby, and, with a blow that might have felled an ox, sent him to the bottom of the stairs; and there he lay insensible. Where the devil the baron hid himself, I cannot fancy; for, after kicking the captain out of doors, I returned to throw Hartzmann from the window; but he had vanished. The dancer had locked herself up, and was calling for assistance from the window; while I, like the demon of destruction, had the house to myself. Now that the living objects of my rage had disappeared, I vented my madness on the furniture and ornaments. Jars, clocks, busts, and pictures, I splintered with the poker; till, tired of devastation, I walked down stairs—stepped over the fellow who lay motionless at the stair-foot—flung myself into the first coach I met, and drove here to tell you that I was duped and ruined."

Poor Jack appeared calmer when he ended. I pressed him to retire to bed and try to compose his excited feelings; but he would not stop, and said he must be at Long's, as Neville intended sending a message that morning. It was useless to argue with him; and after I had arranged to call upon him at twelve, he drove from Craven-street. As morning was well advanced, Aylmer and I were not inclined to seek our pillows again; we therefore dressed and breakfasted.

"Did I not tell you," said the cynic, "what would happen to that unlucky cousin? Egad! I would give nearly as much as you paid *la baronne* for the lesson in *écarté*, to have seen Jack the Devil breaking those swindlers' heads, and trying the temper of Miss Pauline's poker upon her own porcelain afterwards. She must be a harpy of the first order. But, Lord! they're all alike,—profligate by profession, and cold to everything but money. You will go to Long's of course, and lose no time in getting him out of town?"

"But that debt of honour to the baron?"

"Is, in plain English, plunder to a knave.

Nonsense! the scoundrel has stripped him bare enough. If he gives him anything more, let it be

'A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's sake!'

And now for your concerns. Mind our agreement; look to Jack the Devil, and give up looking after music by candlelight. Farewell! I shall be engaged all day,—and try if you can keep out of mischief for a few hours; but I doubt both the wish and the ability."

He smiled and left me.

At twelve precisely I hastened to Long's, to keep my appointment with my unfortunate kinsman. Jack had gone out, but desired them to say that he would return immediately. As I was anxious to get my letters, I directed the waiter to tell Captain Blake that I should wait for him at Berners-street, and proceeded thither.

Four letters had reached me by that morning's post, and a few cards were left for me, and among others Sedley's. But, before I sat down to examine my correspondence, I hastily threw my eye over the "Herald." In its columns there was nothing of moment, but a challenge

to my cousin, to hop against somebody named five hundred yards for as many sovereigns; and an *on-dit*, stating that he had been married on the preceding day to Le Grande at the chapel of the Spanish ambassador. The "Post," however, declared the report premature; as "the ceremony would not take place until Friday the 27th, being the day after Pauline's benefit; when the happy pair would leave town in a new travelling carriage, built to order by Adams, to spend the honeymoon at Brighton."

CHAPTER V.

MORE MISFORTUNES.—THE DUEL.

Capt. Absolute.—'Sdeath! I never was in worse humour in all my life.

Sir Lucius.—Oh, faith! I'm in the luck of it! I never could have found him in sweeter temper for my purpose.

The Rivals.

It has a strange quick jar upon the ear,
That cocking of a pistol, when you know
A moment more will bring the sight to bear
Upon your person, twelve yards off or so.
But after being fired at once or twice,
The ear becomes more Irish, and less nice.

Don Juan.

"HEAVEN first sent letters for some wretch's aid." Pope was wrong: I deny it altogether; and agree with the honest gentleman of Connemara, who blessed God whenever he remembered "the happy times when the post came in but once a fortnight." Of my four packets I examined the superscriptions and seals. There

was one despatch from Manus Blake, an epistle from my beloved Emily, a brief note from Mr. Harrison, and a billet upon coloured paper, addressed to me in a handwriting with which I was unacquainted. Need I say that Emily's was the first seal broken?

I kissed the dear letter, for through the envelope I distinctly felt a ring. It was a memorial of her love—a token that I was not forgotten. I broke the cover—Saints and devils! I found within—my own rose-diamond.

I will not transcribe the letter: it was a gentle request for me to discontinue all correspondence, and a peremptory rejection of my addresses. There were no reproaches,—no irritating allegations; but the simple remark, that one who in a day had forgotten her could not be a person to whom she could safely entrust herself for life. The letter concluded with an affectionate prayer for my prosperity, and an entreaty that I should not unadvisedly injure myself with Mr. Harrison.

The tone throughout was firm but melancholy, and I remarked that the paper in more than one spot was blistered with a tear.

I unclosed my grandfather's note. It was very coldly worded. He said that he disapproved of gambling;—that I knew already. He had heard that I was addicted to that vice, but from my assertions he was willing to discredit the story. Circumstances had changed his belief, and he requested me to meet him on the next Monday, in ——, Clarges-street. He subscribed himself, "Yours, John Harrison."

I broke my uncle's next, and though the contents were no doubt in the writer's estimation very momentous, I read them, I fear, with sad indifference. My aunt had gone on a pilgrimage to Lough Dergh, and Manus was laid up with the gout. A bailiff, in attempting to serve some order of court upon the lands, had been stoned to death by the tenantry; and my uncle, from increasing annoyances, wished to leave Galway for a time. Money was wanting; but he expected to get that soon, and join Jack in London; where, as Manus stated, the heir-apparent was endeavouring to raise cash to pay off family encumbrances. God help my simple-hearted uncle! Jack the Devil was adding to family encumbrances in every way.

The fourth epistle I threw aside: it was probably a billet from the baroness, and I was in no humour for flirtation. What could be done? Drive off directly to Stainsbury, and undeceive Emily and my grandfather. I never felt more annoyed. I was at enmity with all mankind: my kinsman had not only destroyed himself, but embarrassed me with my grandfather and mistress, and at a time when it was so necessary to prove myself worthy of the old man's confidence and Emily's love. I rang the bell—the waiter answered it—and before I could give him my orders, he handed me a card, and told me "Colonel O'Donnel" had called on particular business.

Now, who the deuce was Colonel O'Donnel? I never heard of him before. What did he want? I desired him to be shown up, and waited very impatiently for his appearance.

The colonel was a smart undersized personage, who made the most of his height, and held himself straight as a halbert. He bowed formally and with the stiffness of a quaker. The waiter handed him a chair—left us alone—and, after a cough preliminary, the visitor commenced.

"Unpleasant occurrence that of last night, Captain Blake." And he looked at my card; I bowed, and he proceeded. "I come from a friend—hem!"

Here was fresh confusion. Aylmer was wrong,—they were not apprentices whom I had jostled in Coventry-street: but he was right when he blamed me for giving a card.

"You struck my friend last night?" said the little commander.

"Yes—it was unavoidable."

"You knocked him down?"

"Admitted; but the provocation, colonel?"

"Oh! we shall not touch on delicate ground, Captain Blake."

"Curse your delicacy!" thought I.

"You are aware," continued the short commander, "that with us military men nothing justifies a blow."

"Why, d—n it, sir!"—and I waxed warm.

"And, d—n it, sir!" rejoined the little colonel, who was constitutionally hot, "the thing won't bear an argument!"

The ambassador was fire and flax, and I out of temper with the world.

"And may I ask, in one word, what have you come for, colonel?"

"A plain question requires a plain answer. A written apology; and that to be published in the newspapers."

"I won't give one."

"Then an immediate meeting is unavoidable:" and the commander bowed. "Will you refer me to a friend, Captain Blake?"

"Of course, if this is your decision."

"It is, indubitably—" and the little man took snuff.

"Then, colonel, I shall save you some trouble. Name place and time, and I 'll be punctual."

"Of course you come attended?"

"Of course, colonel."

"Then, as in these cases," said the commander, "delays are useless and disagreeable, if it suits you perfectly, I would propose this evening."

"Be it so—say four o'clock—and where?"

"Why," said the colonel—"my dear friend—I beg pardon—my dear sir, the north of the city is so notorious, and cockneys through ignorance so troublesome, that they will not permit one to

transact business quietly ; for, as our countryman Sir Lucius says, " In England, if a thing gets wind, people make such a pother, that a man can't fight in peace and quietness." Now, I prefer the Surrey side ; and there is not prettier shooting-ground in Britain than the Dulwich meadows. I think I could mark off as sweet a sod there, as ever a gentleman was stretched upon."

" You are truly considerate, colonel ; and my friend and I will be punctual. But where shall our rendezvous be ?"

" Oh ! the Greyhound. Capital house that ! civil people, excellent wine, and if a man's nicked, the greatest attention. I shall be there before you. Farewell !"

I very ceremoniously saw the colonel out, and in two minutes after, in came Jack the Devil.

" I should have been with you sooner, my dear John," said my cousin, " but you are aware that I shall have a call this morning. My pistols have been in the case these three months ; and when I tried them, the locks were not comfortable —the oil had clogged ;—dull—no music in them —and I just slipped down to Charley Moore, to get him to look over them ;—he 's a good soul,

and promised that in an hour all should be ready for me."

"I'm glad of that, Jack; I undertook to be at Dulwich at four o'clock."

"What to do there?"

"Fight somebody."

"Who?"

"Egad! I forgot to ask Colonel O'Donnel."

"Oh! that's he of the Coldstream. Well, all's right. You may depend upon it, when he brought the message, the man that you are going to meet is a gentleman. But is it not extraordinary that Neville has not sent to me? What was your affair about, John?"

"'Faith, Jack, I can hardly tell."

"No matter; we'll talk of that again. I'll step down to Long's. D—n that fellow Neville! surely he won't let a kicking pass without a call? I'll drive here at three precisely, and have all ready. You have no objection to a saw-handle? I have a case plainly stocked, but the barrels are not so true."

"The saw-handles will do, Jack."

"Oh! very well. I'll answer for the rest. Remember, John, no signal-work—no dropping

handkerchiefs; I have known the steadiest shot in Galway bothered by it;—the word 's the thing, "Ready—fire!" No mistaking that; and then a man can keep a steady eye upon his object—cover him about the hip, for you may always allow three or four inches for the rise of a ball, no matter how correctly the pistol may be loaded."

After this friendly advice, Jack the Devil departed to see if he had any chance of a shooting-match himself; and I strolled into the Park to commune with my own thoughts, and pass the time over until my cousin called with a summons to the field.

Here I was, as unfortunate a private gentleman as England could produce. I was in a pretty series of scrapes — discarded by my mistress, suspected by my grandfather, on the eve of a duel with a man whose name I could not tell, and deliberately doing an act that Mr. Harrison had solemnly denounced, and, of course, quite certain that I should incur his lasting displeasure. To add to my misfortunes, Alymer was invisible, and I could not obtain counsel from the cynic in this my hour of need.

The coloured billet had remained neglected in my pocket. I broke the seal with indifference: it was not from the baron's helpmate, as I had supposed, but an anonymous note, apprizing me that the writer would call at nine o'clock that evening at my hotel, and requesting that I might be alone.

If one could decide a dispute upon the spot, I verily believe that every man would be a hero; but when the blood cools down to its accustomed temperature, and the strong impulse of passion subsides, it is marvellous how little inclination even a professed duellist has to be deliberately fired at. There are men, however, who feel obliged to anybody who will accommodate them with a quarrel; and in that amiable class I would place my worthy cousin Jack the Devil.

Need I then confess, that when his greys stopped in Berners-street, I would have been better pleased that our drive was on some other errand? but the die was cast, and I had nothing but my own folly to blame,—for Jack, to give the devil his due, was innocent of this mishap altogether.

We drove over Westminster Bridge, passed

the Elephant and Castle, whisked through Camberwell-green, and reached the Greyhound exactly seven minutes within four, by the clock at the Horse Guards.

Colonel O'Donnel's groom was waiting to show us the ground, as he said that the gentlemen had slipped into the fields to avoid observation. I cursed the colonel's caution, while Jack was in raptures with his prudence. He, Jack had often heard of him—a steady, straightforward friend; no humbug;—he thought he recollected to have seen him; if so, he was tried for his life about three years ago, for shooting his colonel by candle-light. It must be the same; and it was some pleasure to meet a man who knew how things should be done.

While Jack was delivering himself of this laudatory notice of the short commander, he was very adroitly concealing the pistol-case under his cloak—the phaeton was sent round to the yard—and, after issuing due directions to his servant touching the greys, we started for the scene of action.

"I wonder who it is we are to shoot?" said Jack the Devil.

"Or be shot by?" I responded with a sigh.

"No fear of that, John. Has there been an accident in our family these thirty years but two? and everybody knows that our grand-uncle, long Dominick, would have shot Clancy, if he had not forgot his spectacles. Luck's everything — never take your eye from your man — pull when you come to the present, and I 'll bet a hundred we give the coroner a job."

"Heaven forbid, Jack! It would ruin me;— if I killed him I should be disinherited."

"Then level low and hit him in the legs. Heigh ho! I should like to get an inventory of the articles I smashed at Pauline's. Zounds! it would make a saint swear, to think that for a petty squabble, you will have the pleasure of shooting at a scoundrel that only elbowed you in the street; while I, under such provocation, must be contented with breaking a footman's bones, and demolishing a room full of trumpery."

As he spoke we mounted a stile; and, in the corner of a large grass-field, observed two persons in waiting, who we concluded were the aggrieved one and his friend. We were not

astray; for, on approaching them, the little commander advanced uncovered, and Jack was equally polite. For my part, I felt no fancy to exhibit a bare head to a gentleman I intended laming for life; and indeed my opponent appeared equally unsocial, for he turned his back and walked slowly off. I strove to catch a glimpse of his features, but he was so closely enveloped in a box-coat that it failed me totally.

Our companions were not idle, but went to work like men of business. The amenity of manner that marked their intercourse was delightful, while their politeness would have put a master of ceremonies to the blush.

"I think this is as sweet a spot," said the little man, "as we could find upon the field;—shall we mark distance from this glove?" and he laid one of his white kid-skins on the ground.

"We'll place the gentlemen, if you please, colonel," responded Jack the Devil, "across the ridge, and not leave any line to direct the eye."

"Precisely so." And the commander smiled graciously.

"Do you fight at ten or twelve?" inquired my cousin, and his bow was superb.

"Why, faith!" said the colonel, "personally, I prefer *ten ;* but I fancy *twelve* is the favourite distance,—and one must go with the world, you know." And the gentlemen interchanged an innocent laugh.

"Allow me to tell-off the ground," said my kinsman, "and you can correct the paces after me."

"Lord, by no means!—quite certain of your accuracy;" and Jack stepped over the grass as gingerly as a dancing-master. Confound him! he seemed crippled; I had seen him take a stride of twice the length in crossing a dirty sweeping.

The colonel turned to me.

"Perfect gentleman your friend there—*au fait* at his arrangements. With a *leetle* more experience, there would not be a prettier second in England. We may regulate the tools," he continued, as my cousin returned after sticking a twig into the turf, twelve paces from the colonel's kid-skin; and the commander proceeded to unlock a mahogany-box, hitherto concealed under an opera-cloak.

"What a nice fellow that major is, John!—

a regular trump. I'll take my oath he's the man that was tried for murder." And he too opened his case, and the friends extracted a weapon each from their respective depositories. The colonel handed a pistol to my kinsman, who in return presented his to the short commander.

"Could you execute with that *Standenmeyer?*" said the little man.

"Beautifully balanced!" responded Jack the Devil. "But I am more accustomed to the saw-handles."

"Sweet lock that of Mortimer!" and every click went through me like a small-sword. There they were, bandying compliments, and criticising "back action," as coolly as if chatting in a shooting-gallery.

"Shall we load the case?" quoth Jack.

"I think we had better, as your friend is not disposed to apologize: it will save trouble, and bring the affair sooner to an end."

"The devil take both!" thought I. From the extent of their preparations, it was quite evident that it would not be any fault of theirs, if the sulky gentleman or myself was not, as

they say in Connaught, "left quivering on a daisy."

I never saw men more expeditious. The pistols were loaded,—the firing signal agreed upon,—and a sovereign tossed for choice of ground and word. Jack won that honour, and he placed me with my right toe directly behind the commander's white kid-skin.

The colonel was equally attentive to my adversary: he assisted him to take off his great-coat, and then put him on his ground.

"Be steady, now!" said Jack the Devil, in a whisper. I fixed my eye upon my opponent. Holy Saint Patrick! the first glance showed me a man I had never differed with in my life — it was Neville of the Guards!

Jack broke silence. "Stop, colonel; there 's some mistake."

"None in the world, my dear fellow," replied the short commander.

"Why, these gentlemen have no cause of quarrel!" exclaimed Jack.

"Oh, abundant!" said the soldier.

"I tell you they have not."

"Why, d—n it, sir! was there not a kicking-match in Curzon-street?"

"Ay; but there was another in Coventry-street."

"'Pon honour, gentlemen, the thing is most incomprehensible. Will you, sir,"—and he addressed himself to me,—"inform me if it be your intention to fire at my friend?"

"I assure you, sir," I replied, "I have not the most remote intention of doing so."

"Then, sir, who the devil did you come out to fight?"

"Nobody that I see here, sir."

"Are you, sir, Captain John Blake?'

"I am,—and there is another"—and I pointed to my kinsman.

"That is the person who insulted me," said Neville to his friend.

"Well, well; the thing is easily remedied. Had it been half an hour later, we might have had a shot or two, before we found the true man. Ah! that puts all right,"—for Jack and I had changed places. "And now, gentlemen, are you ready?"

Both answered in the affirmative. The little man took out his snuff-box, and nodded politelv to me. I gave the word,—Pop—pop—went the pistols—and down went Mr. Neville of the Guards!

CHAPTER VI.

FEMALE VISITERS.

Stand by; pray, gentlemen, stand by! Lord have mercy upon us! did you never see a man run through the body before?

Trip to Scarborough.

Ros.—Why did he swear he would come this morning and came not?

Cel.—Nay, certainly, there is no truth in him.

Ros.—Do you think so?

Cel.—Yes. I think he is not a pick-purse, nor a horse-stealer; but, for his verity in love, I do think him as concave as a covered goblet, or a worm-eaten nut.

As You Like It.

When Neville fell, I rushed forward and raised him in my arms. The commander's systematic precision of bearing during an affair of honour, prevented any exhibition of haste upon his part; and I verily believe that he would not have lengthened his military stride of two-

and-thirty inches, to have succoured both the combatants, had they been *in articulo mortis* on the sod. Jack, to do him justice, forgot all feelings but the kindliest, and came promptly to my aid. We found that Neville had been shot through both legs; and the colonel and I bandaged the wounded limbs with our pocket-handkerchiefs, while Jack ran to the Greyhound, and brought our own servants and a chair to carry the sufferer off the field. Surgical assistance was obtained,—Neville put to bed,—and, as the hæmorrhage was stopped, and the bones were uninjured, we left the patient in a fair way of recovery.

We returned to town in Jack's phaeton—for he remained at Dulwich until some of his antagonist's friends should arrive,—and consequently the little colonel and I drove *tête-à-tête* to London. Nothing could exceed his admiration of my kinsman. "He is really a most promising lad—excellent idea of field management—and his shooting beautiful! By the way, my dear boy,—you will, I know, forgive me,—but you were a *leetle* hurried. Never run your words into one another,—leave four seconds be-

tween your 'ready—fire.' Observe the consequence;—your friend, instead of drilling mine six inches under the hip-bone, would have been into him about the third rib. Your rapidity, my dear fellow, spoiled a splendid shot. But it's as well as it is, and saves some trouble; for in England, when a man's nicked, they make such a rout about the thing. I'm delighted with your cousin: I would take him out, were I going to fight in a sawpit."

The conversation turned to the causes of the quarrel, of all which, excepting the assault, the colonel was profoundly ignorant. He listened with great attention, and entered with marked interest into the detail I gave him of Jack's misfortunes. I told him unreservedly all I knew of the affair at Pauline's.

"By Heaven!" said the commander, "it is a thousand pities that, when he was smashing bones, he did not dislocate the dancer's ankle and break the baron's back. Why, they are an infernal gang: but this poor boy must be looked after, and these swindlers obliged to disgorge their plunder. Here, my dear friend, put me down at the corner; you'll find me

always at home to you in Jermyn-street;" and he gave me a card. "Now do call—I am a man of few professions; but I like you well, and your cousin better; and in storm or sunshine, remember you have a friend in town, and depend on Mick O'Donnel." He squeezed my hand, and we parted.

The colonel was a singular character—a stout ally and a determined enemy. On every subject but duelling he was rational; and, excepting the extravagant opinions he entertained of what he termed honour, the man was acute and intelligent.

It was past seven when I reached Berners-street. Dinner, according to my directions, was served in a private room; and over my wine I awaited the evening interview appointed by my anonymous correspondent. As a departed Irishman of jovial memory used to say, I felt "an unquenchable thirst,"—was feverish, excited, and unhappy,—just in that reckless state of mind that a man under great embarrassment will feel himself. A clock on the mantelpiece told the quarters,—eight struck,—one, two, three chimed—and the waiter entered to say

that a lady in a hackney-coach inquired for me. She was instantly shown up; and, wrapped in a large travelling cloak, the *incognita* entered.

Great was my curiosity. Who could the unknown be? Confound the cloak!—it concealed her altogether. Nothing but an ankle was visible; and, faith! it was a pretty one. I handed her a chair, pressed her to be seated, and casually observed, that "I had had the honour to receive her note."

"Indeed you had no such honour," said a well-remembered voice, as the visiter threw aside her muffling, and disclosed the features of my old friend Phœbe.

"Good God! is it possible? What a surprise! I thought it was ——"

"One of your city sultanas!"—and she flung away my hand, and looked at me with marked displeasure.

"What is the matter, Phœbe?"

"Can you ask the question, sir?"—and her eyes flashed with anger. "Ah, captain, was it not an honourable exploit to win the affections of the most artless being that ever was swindled of her heart by a scoundrel? You might have

at least allowed a second day to pass, after you swore eternal constancy, before you lacerated her feelings by an open exhibition of your profligacy."

"Phœbe! what, in the fiend's name, are you dreaming of?"

"I am not dreaming; nor will your assurance fool me, sir. You, who would deceive an unsuspecting girl, when you were the paramour of an infamous *figurante*, the associate of blacklegs,—a gambler and a debauchee——"

"Phœbe! are you leagued with all the world to drive me into lunacy? I tell you, I am innocent,—Emily is deceived, my grandfather misled, and you unjust."

A smile of bitter incredulity played over her handsome face, as I continued, solemnly,—

"You wrong me—you do, by Heaven! I am not the person whose name has been before the world,—whose follies have been bruited about, and, most unfortunately, fathered upon me."

Phœbe looked at me. "Would that I dare credit you! Were your words true, how much misery would be spared to that devoted and

heart-broken girl, who now believes that you are false, and she forsaken."

"By my soul's hope, I am innocent!"

"Oh, convince me, and I shall be too, too happy!"

"Phœbe, you loved my mother tenderly: by her dear memory, I am wronged,—foully, grossly wronged! Hear me, and judge if I be guilty."

I briefly explained to her that Jack was the delinquent.

"I believe it—God be praised!"—and tears rolled down her cheek. I took her hand, and sealed our reconciliation with a kiss.

"I suppose that is intended for Miss Emily?"—and her *espiègle* features resumed their customary archness.

"Ay, Phœbe; take this one too. You know, you can deliver both at the same time."

"Well, well, we have no time for kissing: I came off, unknown even to poor Emily, to ascertain if you were the *roué* you have been represented. Had you any letter from Mr. Harrison?"

"I had a brief notice, that he would be in town the day after to-morrow."

"He is on his road—Sedley and Miss Emily accompany him. Can you guess the object of his journey?"

"Not exactly, Phœbe."

"Only to disinherit you, and marry your mistress to your rival."

"Then they shall—if Emily loves me—first step over my corpse before they reach the altar!"

"Love you!" exclaimed Phœbe; "she loves you devotedly. Your grandfather may alienate your inheritance, but not her heart. You must see her immediately."

"How shall I effect that?"

"Easily,—I will manage it. To-morrow they stop at St. Albans, excepting Sedley, who proceeds to town to have all things ready for their reception next day in Clarges-street. Come after dark to the Verulam Arms, and, when the old man retires for the night, you and your fair mistress may settle plans of mutual disobedience"—and she laughed.

"But where is that vixen Annette?"

"Safe in London, getting the house aired and planning mischief. There is none with Miss Emily but Susan, and she is faithful. Have you done anything in Sedley's business?"

"I have: an efficient agent is at work, and with good prospect of succeeding."

"Well, I must leave you."

"So soon, Phœbe?"

"Yes; for I will not sleep until I whisper peace to the gentlest sufferer that ever anchored her happiness by that rope of sand—the constancy of an Irishman!"

I caught Phœbe in my arms to exact the penalty of her libel on my faith; and, after arranging my visit to St. Albans, she took leave of me and drove off.

It struck nine before my mother's *confidante* departed; the first chime tinkled from the mantel, and still the lady of the coloured billet had not appeared. My interview with Phœbe had lightened my bosom of its load,—"I breathed again," and hope succeeded to despair. Another chime from the chimney-piece,—the *incognita* was a false one. No matter; I eschewed temptation, and determined to set out for

Craven-street and report progress to Aylmer. To-morrow night I should again meet Emily. I thought of it with rapturous delight; rose,—took my hat,—when the door opened, a lady was announced, and in came the fair visiter.

I never was more surprised: she was totally unknown—young, handsome, and brilliantly dressed, as if for an evening party. I am ashamed to say, that I was far from being at my ease; and as to the lady, whatever errand had brought her here, her courage had entirely vanished, for her cheeks were deeply coloured, and her eyes cast upon the carpet. There was no affectation in her timidity. Had I achieved a conquest? it certainly looked like it; and for a few moments I began to fancy that I was rather a dangerous person to admit to the society of gentlewomen who were constitutionally susceptible. But a minute more, and I discovered that I was not the lady-killer I had believed myself.

"Madam—"

"Sir—"

"May I inquire if this visit be to me?"

"Are you, sir, Captain Blake?"

"Yes, ma'am: but there are two captains of that name."

"I know it, sir. You are in the Rifles?"

"I was lately, ma'am; but am now a Fusileer."

"Your cousin resides at Long's, and is called in London "the Sporting Captain—"

"And in Ireland, Jack the Devil."

"God bless me! for what, sir?"

"Nothing, madam, but to distinguish him from me. I am moral and grave, and Jack's spirits are at times considered by strangers a little too exuberant."

"You are Captain Blake's next kinsman?"

"I have that honour, madam. May I offer you a glass of wine?" The lady politely declined it.

"Or coffee, madam?"

"Neither, sir. This visit will, to use the mildest term, appear intrusive from a person you never saw before."

"Forgive me, madam. From one so pretty, a visit is an honour; and surely I have seen that handsome face before?"

The lady smiled archly. "Yours, captain,

is the country of compliment. May I ask where we met ?"

" Why, faith, ma'am, I cannot at this moment precisely say. The place may have escaped my memory; but that face, once seen, is not to be forgotten."

" I am come, sir, to——" And she stopped.

" Madam, if in any way I can be serviceable, command me."

" May I repose unlimited confidence in you—known to me by character well, but in all else a stranger ?"

" You may, upon my life, madam."

" Then, sir, your country and profession shall be guarantees for your honour. Captain Blake, you are about to hear the confession of a weak and romantic girl."

She blushed to the very eyes, and I felt rather queer. Hang it! I had destroyed her peace of mind, and I unable to recollect where the deuce I did the mischief.

" To confess to you the secret of my heart—to own that I have placed my affections on one——" She stopped. Poor soul! I pitied her

embarrassment, and endeavoured to restore her confidence.

"I acknowledge your kindness, captain; but this is weakness — and ——" Another pause. The declaration was coming,—and I felt for the sweet girl, when she would learn that I could not return her passion.

"You will call me foolish—mad, when I tell you my hopes of earthly happiness are centred in one ——" Another pause: it was intolerable.

"Name him, madam!—name him, for God's sake!"

"——Whom the world calls dissipated, immoral, and extravagant."

"The world is wrong, madam;" I exclaimed warmly; "and it is a shame for the world to ——"

"Ah, Captain Blake! our feelings are the same. We are blind to the foibles of those we love; and you would, if possible, excuse your cousin's wildness."

"My cousin's wildness, madam?"

"And yet, I own to you his relative and friend, that, faulty as he is, I love him."

"What, madam! love Jack the Devil?"

"Ay, even by that alarming name!"

Here was a mistake—death to my vanity! if there was a broken heart, Jack was the delinquent.

"Madam, my cousin is a happy man."

"Would that he thought so!" said the lady, with a sigh. "But my visit here, no doubt, has created with my father's servants some surprise, and a longer stay would but increase it. Will you accompany me to Drury-lane, where we have a private box to-night? and, as we shall drive round by Portland-place, there will be time to explain everything I wish."

"I shall be delighted, madam;" and I rose to hand her to the carriage. I looked at her attentively: she was indeed a charming girl. Suddenly I recollected her face; I had seen her at the opera, and my fair visiter was the director's daughter.

We drove off. "I shall be brief," said Miss Moreland. "I was last winter in Dublin, on a visit to my aunt, and there I first met your kinsman: there our flirtation commenced, and last autumn it was renewed at Cheltenham.

Captain Blake has since been a visiter in town. With my mother he is a favourite, as she thinks his wildness merely the outbreakings of youth, and that time will correct his errors. My father holds a different opinion, and pronounces your cousin irreclaimable.

" It is unnecessary for me to say more, than that for me he has professed an ardent attachment, and that I am weak enough to believe him. I know the difficulties under which his father labours, and that the fortune, to which in a few months in my own right I must succeed, would be to a distressed gentleman no trifling object. But he has candidly acquainted me with his family embarrassments, and proudly declined to marry me. Now, why does this attach me to him ? because I know that he has rejected the hand of a wealthier heiress, which was unequivocally offered him by the owner. Would he but show any promise of reformation, my father could easily relieve his family estates from all their encumbrances : but, alas ! every paper proclaims some fresh proof of his dissipation, and I fear the hold I once had upon his heart is gone. I know that he

has been exposed to the witcheries of a fascinating woman; and, irritated by a paragraph in a newspaper, that named the day on which he was to wed her, in a fit of anger I wrote him his dismissal."

"Confound her, the Jezebel!" I ejaculated with a sigh: "that vixen also got me the rout."

"Were you too an admirer?"

"Not I, madam; I'm a perfect Joseph—a man of snow—and my cousin's delinquencies, may God forgive him! have fallen upon me. But, my dear lady, that *liaison* is ended—if there be faith in broken china, Jack's delusion is over—and, if you would permit him, at your feet he would recant his errors, and assure you of his determination to amend."

"Then why did he not meet me in the Park at four? I told you I had a woman's weakness to expose; and, shall I confess it? after his dismissal was despatched, I cried all night, and with the first light of morning wrote to say that I would see him once more, and allow him to persuade me that all I had heard of his gal-

lantries was untrue, and that he was constant as a turtle."

"He could not meet you, my dear girl, to-day."

"No; for he was probably driving out that——" And she shook her pretty head passionately.

"Indeed he was not," I replied.

"Then he was riding a race, or perpetrating some other folly?"

"He was—"

"Where?"

"At Dulwich."

"And could he not have chosen another day to look at pictures?"

"He was not in the gallery."

"Where was he then?"

"In the meadows."

"The meadows! What was he doing there?"

"Why, d—n it! madam, I suppose all will be in the morning papers,—he was shooting at a Guardsman."

"Heavens! go on, sir."

"And, if Colonel O'Donnel can be credited, I spoiled a beautiful shot, and Jack the Devil hit him in the legs, instead of drilling him through the pericardium."

"And, sir—what are the consequences?"

"Nothing very momentous. The surgeon has got a patient—the Greyhound a customer—and the only loser is Pauline, who has suffered heavily in character and china."

"Well—is not a woman to be pitied, who embarks her happiness in the same venture with an Irishman? teased by his unsteadiness, and tortured by his pugnacity."

"But, Miss Moreland, what could induce you to trust me so confidentially? I am a stranger."

"No, no; I have for hours talked of you with your cousin—laughed over your earlier adventures—made love with you in the militia—crossed in your company the field of Waterloo—and knew that in you his confidence, his regard, was so entire, that if any on earth could reclaim him, you were that person."

"No;—that, my sweet friend, shall be your task. Well, between us, we will save him.

But the carriage stops, and I must say farewell."

"Will you not come to our box for a few minutes? My mother dined out; but before now she has arrived at the theatre. I wish to introduce her to my *new relative*,"—and she smiled archly.

"No, my dear girl, I cannot: important business of my own, and of your favourite, my worthy kinsman, obliges me to leave you."

"Promise me then to call at Portland-place early to-morrow."

I did so—named the hour—kissed my new cousin on the strength of our relationship—jumped into a hackney-coach, and found the cynic in Craven-street very anxiously expecting my return.

CHAPTER VII.

FRESH TROUBLE.—STREATHAM.—SOPHIA MORELAND.

If any man doubt that, let him put me to my purgation. I have trod a measure; I have flattered a lady; I have been politic with my friend, smooth with mine enemy; I have undone three tailors; and I have had four quarrels.

As You Like It.

Berinthia.—Consider, I'm a woman, and form resolutions accordingly.

Amanda.—Well, my opinion is, form what resolution you will, matrimony will be the end on't.

Trip to Scarborough.

During a faithful narrative of the warlike and amatory achievements in which I had been engaged since I had separated from my Mentor, Aylmer exhibited unqualified surprise.

"Upon my life, Mister John Blake, from this interesting detail of your recent exploits, I am half persuaded that the world has gone mad by

consent, and that I too am included in the general lunacy. While I have been in two hells and a spunging-house, endeavouring to save you from destruction, you have spent your time pleasantly enough in fighting and flirtation,—shooting at honest gentlemen before you know their names, and assisting *la baronne supposée* in her innocent researches through the music-stand. That you are mad, is certain; and, judging from symptoms, I am little better: *I*—imagining it possible to extricate you from one great difficulty, when you plunge into fresh ones when they occur,—and when they do not, you create them. Indeed, Jack, the sooner you provide a keeper, the safer for all parties; and certainly the rest of the company must be looked after. The colonel should be sent to the hulks,—your kinsman to the colonies,—the baron to the tread-mill,—and the ladies to a penitentiary. As to the director's daughter, nothing can save her but bread and water and an asylum. If ever woman was demented since the days of Ophelia, she is. What! she would reclaim the wanderer, and reform the rake? She loves him, I suppose, as

Puff says, ' from having heard his character, or seen his picture ; or from knowing he was the last man in the world she ought to be in love with ; or for any other good female reason.'—But I should not wonder at her folly: now-a-days, the more incorrigible a fellow is, the more certain is his success with women. Miss Moreland is, of course, no exception to the rest of her sex. If Jack the Devil had shot that other fool in Dulwich fields, she would have flown with him to a cell ; and if he carries off her own maid, the whole city police would not restrain her from flying to his arms."

I laughed at the cynic's severity.

" Pshaw ! Aylmer, you are more irritated against the fair than ever. Remember that all are not descendants from the Conqueror."

" No ; but they all inherit the mischief of their great progenitrix, mother Eve."

" By the way, what has become of that estimable personage, the Lady Agnes? Is the old *millionaire* alive ?"

" Peter is dead as Julius Cæsar; and his lady, as miserable as I wish, and she deserves to be."

"Indeed, Aylmer!"

"Ay, Jack, my prognostic touching the disposition of the old opium-dealer's effects was, I am happy to inform you, fully realized. Beyond her jointure,—a wretched five hundred a-year, and that too contingent on her remaining single,—Sir Peter did not bequeath her ladyship ten pounds to buy a mourning-ring,—no, not even a carriage or a silver spoon. His entire wealth was divided among nieces and nephews. A new generation has been formed—dress-makers become heiresses, and saddlers' apprentices fashioned into men of *ton*. As to that scoundrel her brother, he has gone regularly to the dogs: expatriated from debt and poverty, he drags out life in a small Dutch town—and sometimes so hard-up, that the gallant earl wants money to clear scores with his *blanchisseuse*. But as to your affairs,—is it not intolerable that, when I have almost effected my great object, and obtained the means of re-establishing you with your relative, you should mar all, and madly risk his displeasure? Hear me,—I have discovered Sedley's confederate,—him of whom Phœbe spoke. He is at this mo-

ment in a lock-up house for a paltry debt of twenty pounds, from which his quondam friend cannot, or will not, relieve him. I have nearly bought him over; and if I succeed in it, Sedley is undone. Evelyn comes here betimes to-morrow—then we finally arrange our plans; and in twenty-four hours I will save you, if you do not ruin yourself."

After some general conversation, we parted company.

Next day, although our breakfast was an early one, before it terminated Evelyn was announced. I never saw a more finished picture of early debauchery than the appearance this wretched man presented;—a hollow cheek—a faded and leaden-coloured complexion—an eye sparkling dimly from the effects of strong stimulants, showed that dissipation had done its work. The teacup shivered in his hand; he was a wretched wreck—an undone drunkard. Aylmer started with him immediately in a hackney-coach; and before their carriage cleared the street, another entered it, and stopped at the door.

The steps fell with the rattle of a hurried

passenger, and, unannounced, in came Jack the Devil.

Jack, to do him justice, was certainly a handsome fellow; and, God knows how! he had acquired that decided ease which stamps the gentleman. I remarked that his dress was careless to a degree; but there was an air—a *manière*, real and decided about him, that told his caste. The Galway aristocracy not being purposed for filling places about court, are not, generally, the most polished of the community; but Jack's gentility it was impossible to mistake, and I began to fancy that the director's daughter was not just so mad as the cynic endeavoured to persuade me she was.

My kinsman was *triste* and dejected, and no effort could conceal his inquietude. Was Neville dead? I made a rapid inquiry, and found that the wounded man was convalescent. Jack farther added that Pauline would decamp after her benefit,—the footman's collar-bone was uniting,—and the baron particularly urgent for a bond or post-obit for the thousand he had won. He was farther pleased to intimate that, under all circumstances, he intended

retiring for a few days to the country, and that he should feel obliged if I would manage in his absence some matters amatory and honourable.

"And, my dear Jack, what has produced this discreet scheme on your part?"

There was great embarrassment in his look.

"Come, what has occurred? out with it."

"Why, 'faith! the truth is, that scoundrel Hartzmann carried my I. O. U. to my own coachmaker, to raise money on it; and he—d—n these fellows! they are all alike,—plunder one first, pounce on him afterwards;—he thinking matters looked blue, attempted to arrest me."

"Well, and how did you escape?"

"Why, the waiters — fellows I had paid munificently,—the scoundrels sold me."

"Go on, Jack."

"I had just dressed. My own servant was gone out; and in descending the stairs he saw in the lobby a bailiff and his follower in deep consultation with a man who was my favourite attendant. Enough transpired to tell him that I was betrayed. He returned; but so quickly did they follow, that he had scarcely time to

apprize me of my danger, and I to turn the key in the lock. Well, they thundered outside, and threatened to break in the door; and I swore in reply, that I would shoot the first man that entered. At last the hinges began to yield, and I waxed desperate. The second pistol we did not require at Dulwich unfortunately remained loaded. A kick, like a donkey's, nearly drove in the door—I called to Pat in Irish to drop upon the lobby;—he fell flat as a flounder, and I fired through the centre panel. The thieves!—they have more lives than a cat,—the ball rattled between their heads—shivered the wood-work to pieces—knocked down a yard of plaster behind, and covered them with a shower of mortar. Away they went, head over heels—Pat Brady with kicks accelerating their movements. I took the same opportunity; and, while the Philistines ran off for assistance, I bolted into Conduit-street, jumped into a coach,—and here I am!"

"And hence you must depart *instanter!* Where will you go to, Jack?"

"Egad! you puzzle me. No matter,—call a coach, and we will consult on that afterwards."

I rang the bell—a chariot was procured—Jack jumped in, I followed, and away we went over Waterloo-bridge.

My kinsman was in tribulation,—his losses *éclated*—his tradesmen on the alert—himself without a guinea; and as to his affairs, like the "audit" of Hamlet's father, "how they stood, none knew save Heaven."

We drove to Streatham Common, and stopped at the Red Lion; and here we decided that Jack should remain *perdu*, until some arrangement with his creditors should render concealment unnecessary. I was sorry that circumstances obliged me to leave him; for even his reckless spirit had given way, and he appeared to feel acutely on other subjects besides his embarrassments. His pride had received a mortal wound—he was a fallen star in the high and palmy sphere of fashion; and when I rose and told him I must return to London, he became deeply affected, and I perceived a tear trickling down his cheek. But this weakness was momentary, and Jack was mortified that I had observed it.

"D—n it! John—I would not for five hun-

dred that any man in England had seen me so womanly as I must appear to you; but so many causes of annoyance crowd upon me — so many evidences of past folly rise in judgment, that I wish Neville had made a better shot, and rid me of a life that has become almost intolerable."

"Pshaw! my dear boy. Is this manly— to give in because some trifling mishaps have crossed you?"

"No; hang it! John, I am not the man to sit down and cry because Fortune played the jade. It is another cause that tortures me. There is a secret that I wished you to know, and that I intended telling, had the d—d rackety life I have latterly led permitted a quiet opportunity. Sit down, and listen for five minutes. I am attached to a woman, and there exists, or rather existed, a reciprocal regard. You have never seen her; but she is young, handsome, accomplished, and wealthy. I paid my addresses to her—they were received, and I came to London actually to wed her. Curse on that fascinating Jezebel Pauline! in an evil hour I met her; she persuaded me I was

beloved, and, step by step, led me on to ruin. Miss Moreland heard of my visits to Curzon-street; and those infernal newspapers, for want of something to fill up their columns, brought my name into notice, and chronicled my peccadilloes. My mistress, naturally enough, resented these infidelities: she was piqued,—remonstrated, and we quarrelled. An absurd point of honour on my part, prevented me from avowing my faults and promising reformation: for in private, I was dying for an opportunity to break Pauline's fetters, and throw myself at Sophia's feet—abandon my fashionable follies, and marry a woman whom I loved, and fancied that I was beloved by. Alas! John, that hour of wisdom was procrastinated—the infernal blow-up at Curzon-street, brought on a crisis I had not anticipated—and at the very moment when I was penitent, and willing to forswear my former follies, I received a letter from Miss Moreland, declaring our engagement off, and bidding me an eternal farewell. There, John—there lies the arrow that galls me most—the wound that rankles deepest. All else is nothing: they could be easily got over. My debts are

not a thousand pounds — I could raise the money in a week. As to my losses to the baron ——"

"Pshaw! the fellow is a common swindler: don't speak of him, Jack."

"Well, John, I am sure you will oblige me; —my request is but a trifle, but I could not confide it to a stranger. I have written to Sophia merely to take leave, and assuring her, notwithstanding appearances may make the assertion doubtful, that I leave England deeply and devotedly attached. I cannot expect she will believe me; but now, when separated for ever, I feel that I shall never love another so well."

Jack paused. I never thought he could have been half so serious.

"There is another request I would make. This miniature, which was given in happier times, she desires may be returned. Take it, John — give it to her with my best love. If she would but let me keep it, when far away I should often look upon its lovely lineaments, and curse the infatuation that robbed me of the original. In this packet are contained the picture with her letters: she never asked them

from me, but a point of honour tells me, no matter how anxiously I should wish to preserve them as dear memorials of the past, that they should be surrendered. You will see her, John, personally—will you not?"

"I will, Jack, before another hour."

I looked at my poor kinsman; but he avoided my eyes, and walked to the window. He was reclaimable, after all! for though Jack the Devil had but a sorry head, as we say in Ireland, "the heart was in the right place."

I left him in tolerable spirits and drove into town. To destroy any trace to Jack's retreat, I discharged the coach in Parliament-street, took another at Charing-cross, and on my way to Portland-place, determined to visit Colonel O'Donnel, and apprize him of his friend's misfortunes.

He was at home, and with all the eccentricity of his character entered warmly into the affair. Could my cousin have risen in his estimation, the dashing style in which he ejected the officers at Long's would have done it effectually.

"Upon my conscience, that young man is a

credit to our country! Is it not abominable to think that at the order of a rascally mechanic, a bailiff intrudes upon the sacred precincts of a gentleman's dressing-room! I remember once, when a younker in country quarters, a barbarian and his assistant made an attempt upon my personal liberty. I was sitting, sir, at the breakfast-table, and the first weapon I could lay hands on was the poker. It had fortunately been forgotten in the fire for half an hour, and, of course, was red as my own jacket. At the second pass the chief scoundrel bolted like a lamplighter, and I was only able to touch the follower *à posteriori*, as he followed through the door;—egad! I think I hear the phiz. The fellow bellowed like a bull, and the visit was never repeated."

"Would you, colonel, if not particularly engaged, drive down and dine at Streatham?"

"Were I tenfold more so than I am," said the short commander, "I would forego it to comfort my excellent young friend. One thing I would request,—and that is, that nobody shall interfere in Hartzmann's affair until you hear from me."

"You shall have the baron to yourself, colonel." And I left the short commander to call upon my cousin's mistress.

I was set down in Portland-place,—conducted by a black footman to the front drawing-room, and left *tête-à-tête* with Miss Moreland, who issued peremptory orders to the sable functionary "to be denied to all."

"Well, gallant captain, have you appeared at last? For an hour I have been taxing you with forgetfulness; and every chime I reckoned from the church clock, half persuaded me that there was 'nothing but roguery in villanous man.'"

"Alas! how wronged and libelled are our sex! Here am I, Cupid's own messenger, with more *billets-doux* in my pocket, than the postman delivers on 'Saint Valentine's Day.'"

"Indeed! Well, I did wrong you."

"I have already driven a dozen miles—heard the confessions of a desponding swain—kept an assignation with the prettiest girl in Portland-place—and yet am I accused of being a tardy courier?"

"I cry your mercy, gallant sir. Have you seen your cousin?"

"I have, madam; and a more unhappy Irish gentleman could not be found within the bills of mortality. I left him not an hour since, melancholy as 'a lover's lute.' Here are my despatches." And I gave Jack's billet and packet.

She broke the seal, cast her eyes hastily over the letter, and turned pale as death.

"And is he gone?—left me for ever! and, worse than in anger, believing that he was forsaken, and I forsworn!—Ah! Captain Blake, you should have prevented this."

"What, my sweet girl?"

"Your kinsman has left London, and——"

"Only waits permission from the lady of his love—to come back again."

"Why, he takes leave of me, and returns my letters and picture."

"And yet, before a week, I hope he will be owner of the original."

Sophia blushed deeply. "Come, dear Captain Blake, tell me all; for indeed I have been very wretched."

"And so has he. In a word, your letter of recall by some accident miscarried, and he still believes himself a discarded suitor."

"And how does he bear that visitation?" she asked, with a look full of *espièglerie*.

"Why, 'faith! with far less philosophy than I should have supposed."

"Then I have some hold upon his heart?"

"Indeed, my sweet friend, you have. I would not deceive you; and, on my soul! I believe my cousin's love is ardent and sincere, and that you may safely confide your happiness to his keeping."

"Do you say so?"—and her eyes sparkled with delight.

"I do."

"And *how* am I to keep him?"

"Do you ask me for advice which you intend to follow?"—and I looked at her laughingly.

"Why—ye-es—that is, if your counsel jumps with my own humour, and you recommend me to do exactly what I should like to do myself."

"Marry him!"

"Umph! that requires consideration—and I'll think of it till to-morrow, and tell you the result."

"You need not. I'll save you some trouble, and tell you."

"Go on, Mr. Conjuror."

"You'll follow my advice to the letter." We both laughed.

"When will your kinsman see me, confess his wanderings, and——"

"Seal his pardon with a kiss. I shall answer that question in the Irish way—by asking another. Will you drive with me a short distance out of town in the morning?"

"What,—with a dashing Fusileer! Would our intended affinity and cousinship save my fair fame?"

"You must run chance."

"Then I suppose I may venture. What hour will you meet me at my milliner's?"

I named twelve.

"Well—one question more. What road do we travel?"

"Not the *Northern* one. My kinsman will

shortly move in that direction. Adieu, pretty one!"

I left her, satisfied of her admirer's truth, and fully persuaded that Mark Antony, of tender memory, was but a truant in love compared with Jack the Devil.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ARREST.—A SPUNGING-HOUSE, AND AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

Hostess.—Do your offices—do your offices, Master Fang and Master Snare.

Henry IV.

The time was once, when thou unurged wouldst vow,
That never words were music to thine ear—
That never object pleasing in thine eye—
That never touch were welcome to thy hand—
That never meat sweet savour'd in thy taste,
Unless I spake, look'd, touch'd, or carv'd to thee.

Comedy of Errors.

I DROVE to Long's, and found all there in marvellous confusion. My cousin's morning exploit had created a grand sensation throughout the establishment, and was the subject of conversation at every table in the coffee-room. I was soon noticed by the waiters, and to avoid

observation, requested the chief attendant to show me to Jack's room.

"Sad business this, sir! Captain Blake, sir—quite the gentleman—but fear, sir,—a little rash, sir, and may get into trouble."

"There is no doubt upon the subject, my friend; into trouble Captain Blake has gotten."

"Lord, sir! look at the door,—a hole you could put your hand through!"

"Why, yes, the panel is something the worse."

"But the danger, sir. I might have been answering a bell, and passing the lobby, sir;—the ball might have hit me, and then——"

"You would have been 'past praying for;' and Long obliged to put you in the bill, as they do in Galway, when waiters' necks are broken."

"Lord, sir! how little you Irish gents think of murder! Mr. O'Flaherty swore awfully below stairs, that it was a praiseworthy deed, and that there was more sin in shooting a snipe than an officer."

"I am pretty much of Mr. O'Flaherty's way of thinking. Will you have Captain Blake's

bill made out, and direct his servant to put up his things? I 'll call in an hour."

"Yes, sir—I shall, sir.—Very sorry to lose him, sir.—Nice gentleman, if he would not smash doors. But, sir—Mr. Levi was here with his solicitor—examined the place, and swore that they would transport the captain."

"Yes, but they must first catch him."

"They said, they would give five hundred pounds; for, if an example was not made, gentlemen in their line could not do business safely."

"And who is Mr. Levi?"

"An officer, sir."

"An officer!—what service?"

"Oh, sir, he 's in the law—the sheriff-line; but only does West-end business. Would not touch anything in the City,—quite the gentleman,—keeps his carriage,—person of high respectability."

I thought if Jack the Devil had Mr. Levi within the kingdom of Connaught, his respectability would not save him from a horse-pond, or prevent him returning home cropped close as a terrier.

As I walked leisurely to a coach-stand, I

began to think that Jack's morning scrape was of a more serious character, than I had at first imagined. Had the thing occurred in Ireland, the worst consequences would be an injury to his reputation as a shot: but here, there was a prejudice against pistols,—John Bull, in matters where life and limb were concerned, was sometimes stupid; and, if the scoundrels prosecuted, a jury might return a verdict that would enable Jack the Devil to visit Australasia, "passage free." But I was his good angel, and saved him from the consequences of his rashness.

I called a coach,—the steps were let down,—I entered it, and the waterman was closing the door, when two well-dressed men hopped in *sans cérémonie*, and a third mounted beside the driver, and the vehicle moved on. So rapidly the whole was done, that it was some seconds before I could inquire the cause of this intrusion. In reply to my demand of explanation, one of them produced a paper.

"It is useless, captain, to make any noise; you did mischief enough this morning."

"What the deuce do you mean?"

"Nothing," said the fellow drily, "but that you are a prisoner, and here's the writ."

"There is a mistake."

"None whatever. You are arrested at the suit of Blundell and Brown, for three hundred and twenty-seven pounds six shillings."

"You had better pull up, my friends: I owe these people nothing."

"Nobody never owed money," said the second fellow, with a grin. "It's only on 'what we calls suspicion of debt' we touched you."

"And will you persevere, although I again warn you of your error?"

"That we will," said both.

"And where do you intend to take me?"

"To Mr. Levi's lock-up—the best house of its line in London."

"Stop,—you are acting illegally."

They laughed.

"Well, mark the consequences."

"Ah, captain, how soft you are!"

"Very well,—you are cautioned—fellows."

"And your caution won't do, captain."

Finding remonstrance useless, I submitted in

silence, and we were driven for a quarter of an hour, until we stopped in an obscure street, and at a house of most unpromising exterior.

I was conducted into a dirty coffee-room, provided with some half-dozen boxes, each curtained round, to prevent the occupants from being noticed by their companions in misery at the other tables. There was but one captive in the room beside myself, and the unhappy man was killing care over a stoup of gin and water.

He looked like a gentleman on the half-pay list, for his clothing was military and threadbare; but a braided frock and black stock proclaimed his former calling. He appeared sleepy or sulky; eyed me carelessly for a moment; laid down his head upon the table, and slept, or pretended to sleep.

My captivity was particularly ill-timed. False imprisonment was a bore; and to be cooped up in this den of wretchedness, intolerable, as my evening drive to St. Albans might be interrupted, and my reconciliation with Emily delayed. I knew that in a few hours I should be enabled to satisfy the scoundrels of their mistake, and prove to them that they had got

the wrong man. There was nothing for it but patience. I submitted with as much philosophy as I could command—wrote to Aylmer—desired him to hasten to my relief—sealed the note, and was sending for a messenger, when the door opened, and a female came in, and seated herself on the bench beside the sleeper.

The ease with which she approached him told that this was not her first visit to the domicile of Mr. Levi. She touched him lightly on the arm, and the slumberer aroused himself.

"What news, Lucy? Has he returned?"

"Not yet. I have been twice at his private residence. They tell me he is momentarily expected," replied the lady.

"If he is not here directly, I'll blow him up," said the prisoner, with a deep imprecation.

"Has Evelyn and that other man been here?" she asked.

"They have; and I expect both within an hour," was the reply.

"And what have you decided on?"

"I will accept their terms, and send Sedley and his false promises to the devil," said the captive, with an oath.

"But then you lose the bond, and the thousand promised on his marriage," continued the female.

"Pshaw! Lucy, I would not give sixpence for either bond or promise,—one is as valid as the other. And as to his marriage, the return of that infernal fellow from abroad has knocked that hope up. Netty tells me that the young one hates him like poison, and is ready to bundle off with Blake at a moment's notice."

My ears tingled as the conversation proceeded. This must be the very man that the cynic was endeavouring to secure.

"Well, do nothing rashly," the female said in a subdued voice.

"Rashly, girl! Zounds! I have more patience than Job, or I would have never lain here four days for a paltry thirty-pound debt, when, if it were but known that I was under the screw, more detainers would be lodged in an hour, than I could ever rid myself of. Out I go this evening, no matter whether Sedley or Evelyn's friend pays the debt."

While their conversation was proceeding, I fancied I had heard the female's voice before, and

in vain endeavoured to recollect the speaker. My memory failed, and I could not assist it by a view of her face, for her back was turned to me. But I had little time for thought: a man came in; the prisoner addressed him by name; the stranger was my rival—the man on earth whom I was most anxious to avoid. I drew the curtain more closely, and, unseen myself, could examine Sedley with attention.

He was a short and mean-looking personage; his air was vulgar, his figure stout and clumsy. No wonder Emily had rejected the suit of one whom Nature had so lightly gifted. He looked round him cautiously, and perceiving me seated in the opposite box, whispered for a moment to the captive, who rose and followed him, leaving the fair visitor and me in undisturbed possession of the coffee-room.

I addressed her with some common-place remarks, which she as freely replied to. Strange, the voice was perfectly familiar,—I was dying for one peep at the face. Some minutes passed while I was devising means to gratify my curiosity; but the sudden return of my fellow-prisoner rendered it impossible.

To judge from his countenance, the interview between him and my rival had been stormy as brief. He entered in a towering passion, vowing vengeance against "that villain Sedley." From his rage, his communications to his female friend were hurried and disjointed; and it was only possible to collect, that his quondam associate had declared himself unable to release him from arrest for a day or two,—pleaded poverty,—entreated patience,—stated that he was obliged to leave town instantly for the country, and left the prisoner deeply incensed at what he termed, on Sedley's part, villany and ingratitude. While he raved about the revenge he would exact, little information reached me; but in a short time the female pacified him, and he was tolerably composed, when two visitors were admitted, and in them I recognised, although one was closely muffled, my worthy friend the cynic, and his profligate agent, the fallen Evelyn. I drew myself closer into the corner, to avoid observation for a while; but, as Sedley had done before, they took the imprisoned debtor out of the room, and madame and I were once more *vis-à-vis*.

While I was devising measures for obtaining a better view of the unknown, the lady saved me farther trouble, by leaving the box and advancing to the fireplace. She was young and well-looking, married,—I concluded, for I saw a ring glitter on her finger, and there were other matronly indications still less equivocal. A noise in the street caused her to turn her eyes to the window. The light fell strongly on her face,—Saints and angels! the well-remembered features of "the best of daughters" met my view!—my companion was the first lady of my love—the heiress of Captain Daly. From the obscurity of the place in which I was ensconced, my person was indistinctly seen, and Miss Lucinda had no suspicion that her favourite pupil was so contiguous.

"May I inquire, madam, if your husband is a military man?"

"He has been in the army, sir."

"I fancy, madam, I have had the pleasure of seeing him before. Pray, was he ever in the Galway militia?"

"No, sir,—his was an English regiment. But I know the Galway well."

"Then possibly you can give me some information as to former friends."

"Did you know that regiment, sir?"

"A little, ma'am. I was with them in garrison at Limerick."

I inquired for three or four; and the whole corps, with the exception of myself, were dead or married.

"And is Captain O'Doherty alive?"

"Oh yes. He ran away with the paymaster's wife from Strabane, and they are on the Continent."

"What has become of Captain Macdonaugh?"

"He was brought to a court-martial for keeping low company,—dismissed, and died of drunkenness."

"There was a cross and ill-tongued fellow in the corps, called Aylmer. Is he living?"

"Yes, sir; and has recovered a considerable portion of the property he had lost."

"One question more;—I fear I tire you, madam. I remember that for a short time there was a young hemp in the Galway, called Blake;—what has become of him?"

I watched her narrowly, and her cheeks coloured.

"I hardly recollect him, sir. He was, I have heard, a handsome lad: he left us for the line, and is now a captain."

"Indeed! He has been luckier than I anticipated or he deserved. Did he not promise to be a sad *roué*, madam?"

"I don't know. He was so young when he volunteered, and having been abroad since ——"

"Oh, you are accounting for his being still unhanged?"

"Unhanged, sir!"

"Yes, madam. You were too fortunate in escaping his acquaintance—he would have taught you bad habits."

"Bad habits, sir!"

"Oh yes, madam. He kept late hours, was fond of cards, and the worst piquet-player that ever lost a vole."

I saw by the lady's face that every moment added to her confusion.

"There was a family called Daly in that corps,— what has become of the young one?"

"She is married."

"Indeed! I hope comfortably?

There was no answer, but I heard a deep and half-suppressed sigh. The lady's agitation increased as she faintly asked me, "if I knew Miss Daly?" and I answered in the affirmative.

"Where, sir?"

"At Kilcommon, ma'am."

"Kilcommon!" And she reddened to the eyes.

"Yes, madam. Do you remember those quarters?"

Her confusion increased, and in a broken voice she muttered,

"Nothing, sir,—nothing more—than that the town was ugly—the barrack old——"

"The wood-work rotten—and the panels loose."

She started.—"Good God! sir, who are you?"

"Am I then forgotten, Lucy?—*I*, your quondam pupil?"

Never did surprise exceed hers. She sat down beside me, and in few words I learned her history since we last parted.

It was a short and melancholy story. Lucy

had been harshly treated by her parents, and taunted with indiscretion, which their culpable neglect alone had caused; and, to escape domestic misery, she married a lieutenant of a London regiment. When the militia was disembodied, they were thrown almost destitute upon the world. Her husband's habits were idle and dissipated, and in his distress he flew for relief to low gaming-houses,—lived by "ways and means," and was fast hurrying to destruction. He had, she said, wealthy relatives in America, willing to assist him, if he could but get there. But imprisonment would ruin this last hope,—and one of loose principles and conduct like him, would soon be utterly demoralized in a gaol.

I had only time to express my sympathy—give her present relief, and an assurance of future assistance, when Williams and his visitors returned. He was a prisoner no longer,—a treaty with the cynic effected his liberation—the debt was discharged, and he came to remove his wife.

"We understand each other perfectly," said Aylmer.

"We do," was the reply; "and Captain Blake may depend upon my fidelity."

"So much the better for all concerned.—Farewell! we meet you know where to-morrow. I must hurry off to dine with a friend."

The cynic moved a pace or two.

"Not so fast," I said in a low voice; "your friend is present."

Aylmer started, came closer, and looked at me to ascertain my identity.

"In the name of Beelzebub! what brought you here?"

"A hackney-coach and three officers."

"For what?"

"Nothing—but suspicion of debt."

"Will you be serious, or shall I go mad?"

"Sit down," I replied, "and permit that lady and these gentlemen to retire."

Lucy, Williams, and his associate disappeared; and I briefly explained to the cynic the causes of my captivity.

"Is not all this amazingly provoking?" I concluded.

"Why, yes," said Aylmer; "and yet this two hours' captivity of yours will save that

marplot, with the evil cognomen. from certain transportation."

"And was there any chance of that?"

"The fairest imaginable," replied Aylmer. "John Bull does not approve of random practice through panelled doors; and even a bailiff is considered within the pale of legal protection. Ring the bell: the sooner matters are arranged, the sooner we shall get our dinner."

For half an hour Aylmer and the West-end catchpole held a cabinet divan, and Mr. Levi was speedily convinced that I was not the real Simon Pure. A compromise was eventually concluded: I gave a check upon my banker for my cousin's debt to Blundell and Brown, and my false imprisonment was allowed to pair off against Jack's infraction of a certain statute intituled "Lord Ellenborough's Act."

It was five o'clock before these momentous concerns were arranged. We left the lock-up for a tavern—dined—drank a liberal allowance of wine—favoured each other with full details of the "parlous adventures" of the day, and separated at seven o'clock,—I for

"The Castle in Saint Albans,"

and Aylmer, to mature his plans for my aggrandizement and the discomfiture of my rival.

When I thought of it, this was but a melancholy picture of human occupation: yet it was the every-day history of a life,—rising on the ruin of another, if ambitious; and when unaspiring, falling in turn a victim!

CHAPTER IX.

RECONCILIATION.—DETECTION.—SYMPTOMS OF FORGIVENESS.

We met in secret,—doubly sweet;
Some say, they find it so to meet.

Mazeppa.

You would have married her most shamefully,
Where there was no proportion held in love.
The truth is, she and I, long since contracted,
Are now so sure that nothing can dissolve us.
The offence is holy that she hath committed:
And this deceit loses the name of craft,
Of disobedience, or unduteous title,
Since therein she doth evitate and shun
A thousand irreligious, cursed hours,
Which forced marriage would have brought upon her.

Merry Wives of Windsor.

If there be in mortal happiness a moment of sublimated bliss, it is that when the first offending of love is owned and pardoned. I thought the drive to St. Albans interminable, and

though, stimulated by the promise of a double fee, the postilions drove furiously, the miles seemed lengthening, until the smoking horses stopped at the Verulam Arms, and I found myself under the same roof with Emily. From the waiter, who conducted me to a sitting-room, I learned that the next apartment was tenanted by an elderly gentleman and a lady; and farther, that one of her attendants had twice inquired whether "Captain Phillips had yet arrived;" this being my *nom de guerre*. I requested him to announce discreetly to the *demoiselle* of the toilet, that the object of her researches was in waiting.

It was past ten, and a later hour for Mr. Harrison to be out of bed than customary. Every noise in the lobby—every door that opened, made my pulse quicken. At last a decided bustle in the hall announced a movement. I listened impatiently, and heard the well-known voice of my grandfather pronounce, "Good night, love!"

The waiter was an adept—he managed to intimate my presence without delay, and in a

few minutes my mother's *confidante* was introduced, and we were left together.

"Phœbe — dear, dear Phœbe, have you made my peace?—Is Emily here?—does she forgive?—will she see me?"

"Stop, stop; how can you imagine that I could answer half these questions? In short, your peace is made,— your mistress in the drawing-room,— and, worse than all, the foolish girl more anxious to confirm your pardon, than I to recommend it."

"Phœbe, how can I thank you?"

"Well—what new iniquity have you perpetrated? We read your duel in 'The Post;' and that, were anything wanting, settled you no doubt with Mr. Harrison."

"No, no, Phœbe; I have in this, as in other matters, gained laurels which another won. I was not the combatant,— merely a looker-on. But my sweet Emily! where is she? Bring me to her."

"Lord! how impatient the man is! Would it not have been civil on your part, to have inquired where my journey ended; and how I, a

lone and helpless woman, escaped the perils of the road? 'Faith! I am surely possessed, to leave my home and husband, and follow the fortunes of a mad boy and love-sick girl. Here have I been nearly overturned in the mail, besides losing my sleep travelling by night, and probably my character, hunting after a wild Irishman through half the hotels in London."

"Indeed, Phœbe, I am heavily your debtor, and have at this moment nothing to offer which you would accept, save the old payment—thanks and kisses."

"Keep both, gallant sir. The first I don't require—the second may be useful in the next room. Follow me there in five minutes,—and Heaven send the old man does not make one of the party! When travelling, he is always restless; and his man Robert roams through every inn we stop at, as if he were an unquiet spirit condemned to haunt the house. Remember the room,—the door is the first on the right hand. If it be possible to blunder, you 'll do it." She laughed, and left me.

I rang the bell, and put back supper for an hour,—ascertained from the waiter that Mr.

Harrison had retired to his chamber—and, when he had disappeared, I stole on tiptoe to the drawing-room, and next moment Emily was in my arms.

I wonder what the subjects are that lovers talk of in their endless *tête-à-têtes*. My pardon had been duly sealed—my disclaimer of Jack's iniquities implicitly credited — Emily listened and believed my reiterated vows of constancy—our faith was plighted anew, and the rose-diamond sparkled on the finger of my artless and beautiful mistress. More than once, Phœbe came in to tell us that the hour had elapsed — but what were hours to us! Coaches arrived and departed: and, while I played with my love's luxuriant ringlets, and kissed a forehead smooth and white as the artist's marble, the door opened, and remained for a few moments ajar. It closed; I cursed the stupid intruder—some passenger, doubtless, who had mistaken his chamber. No matter—Emily and I were far too happy to think of him for a second. Once more Phœbe came to warn us of the lapse of time. The waiter, as discreet a pantler as ever chipped bread, assured her that my

supper was more than ready, and the cook inexorable, touching farther delay. Supper,—pshaw! supper was a sublunary concern, and we were in the seventh heaven. I execrated the cook,—Emily laughed,—Phœbe scolded,—and again we were left alone.

"Emily," I said, as my arm encircled her, "lives there a man whose influence could sever our bond of love?"

She shook her pretty head. "None, Blake. I never knew what love was till we met."

"And do you love me, Emily?"

"Love you! What is love? Is it to think of you—dream of you—sleep while I prayed for your happiness, and wake with your name upon my lips. If this is love, I love you."

"But your guardian, Emily—your adopted father ——"

"Never did daughter doat upon a parent more."

"I know it, Emily. Would you risk his anger, or renounce me if he commanded you?"

"It would break my heart to leave him——"

"Go on, Emily."

"Yet, were the sacrifice to be made, I would give up all for——"

"Me, Emily?"

She did not speak, but hid her burning cheeks upon my bosom. I pressed her to my heart.

"Then shall no human power sunder us!" I exclaimed. "You are all to me; and though a world were at stake, 'I would not lose thee for a world!'"

My eyes were turned upon my gentle mistress, and at that moment the door opened so silently, that I did not hear the lock yielding. A slight noise made me look round: there stood my grandfather, and behind him the villain Sedley!

Emily uttered a faint scream; but I sprang forward, and though the old man's lip trembled with passion, and his eye lightened with rage, I felt so perfectly satisfied that the crisis of my fate had arrived and was not to be averted, that I made no effort to deprecate his anger. He moved slowly towards the sofa, while Sedley shut the door. Mechanically I advanced to Mr. Harrison, and offered my support—but he spurned my assistance.

"Off, sir!" he said harshly, "I touch no

hand red with another's blood. The murderer's shall never be held in mine !"

" I am no murderer," I replied.

" Oh, I cry your pardon, sir ;—you only maimed your victim."

" You are wrong, sir. I have maimed nobody."

" What !" said the old gentleman, " do you brazen the thing out ? Are you not a duellist—an honourable cut-throat ? and did you not yesterday wound some other fool ?"

" No : it was done by another."

" By another !" And he turned a searching glance at Sedley.

" The papers stated that Captain Blake had been engaged in an affair of honour, and that his antagonist was wounded," said the lawyer coolly.

" A Captain Blake did wound a gentleman, but I am not the man ; and that yon scoundrel could have told you if he pleased." And I directed a fiery look at my rival, who seemed not even to have noticed it.

The old man was fearfully agitated. " Ring," he said,—" order me a glass of water."

Although his voice was addressed to me, Sedley stepped forward officiously. I, with a threatening gesture, waived him back.

"Stop, sir!" I said haughtily; "although my grandsire has refused my hand, he does not think it will contaminate the bell-rope."

"Peace, boy, peace! no brawling here. This scene was unexpected; but it is as well it comes to-night as to-morrow."

The waiter brought in the water, and left the room immediately.

"Emily," he said in a faltering voice, "what means this? Is it an accidental meeting? or have you, whom I imagined artless as a child—pure as the being of a better world, deceived my confidence, and destroyed my hopes? Speak,—tell me the worst."

I marked her agitation,—she could not answer him. She was now mine, and I advanced boldly and took her hand.

"Shall I reply for you, Emily?"

Her look assented,—the old man gazed with attention,—Sedley looked askance; but his look spoke daggers.

"It is *not* by accident I am here, sir: I

have been traduced, slandered, and came hither to assure this beloved one of my innocence, and disabuse you, if you will permit me."

"*Beloved* you call her!—I mark the term. Have you obeyed me, and furthered the suit of this gentleman? or, contrary to my commands, dared to make advances to my ward?"

"*All this have I dared;* and, threatened with your eternal displeasure, have wooed and won this lady. But I have marred the designs of yon mean villain, and saved you the sin of murdering her future happiness."

"Ay, ay," muttered the old man, "the leaven is the same,—reckless and fiery as his father! Boy, know you what you peril?"

"Well—your favour and your estates. That scoundrel in your rear will possibly maintain the one, and succeed to the other."

"But why abuse him?" said the old man, "before me his patron, and that lady——"

"Stop, sir! That lady is my affianced wife."

"Indeed!" And Mr. Harrison bent his eyes upon my mistress.

"She is," I answered, "and we abide your anger."

"Emily—once loved girl—is this so? Have you listened to a betrayer?"

"She has not," I replied boldly. "I have saved her from a union with a villain, and you from the sin of effecting it."

"This, sir, is not to be borne," said my rival, as he came forward. "If I have been protected by you,—if you have considered sacred your promise to the dead—am I to be maligned and you to be bearded by this intemperate young man? My profession, my habits, are different from Captain Blake's: I hold duelling to be a crime, gaming——"

I fixed my eye upon the scoundrel steadily. "What brought you to Levi's house today?"

Sedley turned pale, and the old man noticed it.

"There is more here than meets the eye,—it must be sifted. Captain Blake—" (and the formality of his address almost choked him,)—"what reason have you to charge my ward with crimes that, if proven, would cost him my favour irrecoverably?"

"I will prove him a scoundrel and a knave,

or submit to any penalty, but the loss of you, my sweet Emily." And I took her hand.

"You hear this, Sedley?" And his cold and withering look fell on the conscience-stricken countenance of the *roué*.

"I do," he muttered in confusion; "and if Captain Blake dare——"

"What?"

"Support his allegations——"

"Ay, and prove them."

Mr. Harrison looked at us attentively.—"There 's calmness in his manner," he half exclaimed, as he eyed me carefully. "And have you not played deep,—patronized bruisers,—lived with an opera-girl,—and shot at some fellow in the Guards?"

"No, sir. All and every portion of these charges is unfounded."

The old man bent a wrathful brow, as he said to my discomfited rival,—"Did you not tell me all this was true?"

"I did. The papers——"

"Pshaw! why blame the papers?" said the old man testily; "did I not warn you of their

inaccuracy, and send you specially to town to institute inquiries, and ascertain how far these statements could be supported. You returned, —told me all was too true, and that the profligacy of my grandson was proverbial."

Sedley looked confounded, and made no reply. "And now, John,"—and he turned to me,—"what charges do you bring against this gentleman?"

"He is a ruined gambler,—the associate of blacklegs; and farther, I accuse him of robbing his benefactor—yourself, and concealing his embezzlements by trickery and fraud. Have you ever employed him in any stock transactions?"

The old man started,—and Sedley grew paler still, when he asked him, "if he had made the transfers?"

"It was too late, sir; — an accident delayed the coach, and the offices were closed before I reached town."

"And yet you left me at Daventry before nine!"

Sedley muttered something of a break-down;

but guilt was apparent, and his look was that of a convicted criminal. The old man continued:—

"Go, sir. Return to town; we sleep not under the same roof until your innocence is established." And he desired me to ring the bell and order a post-chaise. "At four to-morrow meet me in London at my solicitor's, and see that you bring the stock-receipts, and ample testimony to refute these damning allegations against your character." Then turning to me, he said, "Youth will be occasionally wayward and irregular, and time and experience may redeem the errors of the head, if the heart be sound; but where there is falsehood and hypocrisy, that case is hopeless."

The carriage-wheels were heard;—Sedley bowed to Miss Clifden,—advanced to take the old man's hand, which he scornfully refused,—passed me with a scowl of deadly hatred, and whispered in a voice too low for any but myself to hear, "Look to yourself, Blake!"

A smile of bitter contempt was the only answer his threat elicited; and in a few minutes we heard the carriage start for London.

"You must be tired, sir? This scene was much too trying for an invalid."

"I am a little nervous; but happy that this *éclaircissement* has taken place. Sedley, I fear, is a lost man. His guilt is clear, and, from some circumstances, I am convinced that in the stock which I entrusted him to transfer, there will be found a serious defalcation. It is but six thousand pounds in all: the money is a poor consideration to the detected worthlessness of the son of him I loved so warmly.—Heigh-ho! And you assure me that all these wild and graceless pranks have been perpetrated by that madcap cousin of Satanic name?"

"Indeed, sir, I am guiltless of deceit or concealment, save in one act of disobedience. And before another day passes, you will freely pardon it, and thank me for being so undutiful, as to become a principal in Love's diplomacy, instead of the *chargé-d'affaires* you intended I should be."

"Well, I believe it is likely to turn out so. But you, traitress!"—and he turned to Emily, on whose sweet face tears and smiles were mingled,—"what shall I say to *you?* You to

conspire with that *roué* to desert me! Was I in my last hours to lose my child — my comfort — my——"

"Oh, no, no! I will never, never leave you!" And she flung her arms around his neck, and wept upon the old man's bosom.

Mr. Harrison was deeply affected. "Kiss me, my own darling,—and now to bed. It is late, and I wish to speak a few words to John." And he blessed her fervently.

"Good night, Blake!" she said, as with cast-down looks she presented her white hand to me.

"I am a little near-sighted, love," said the old man archly.

The hint was not lost upon me, and poor Emily left the room covered with blushes.

"Have you supped, John?"

"No, sir."

"Order it here, and I will sit with you."

I did so,—made a hurried meal,—assisted my grandfather up stairs,—talked politics while Robert undressed him,—bade him good night, and sought my pillow to sleep and dream of Emily.

CHAPTER X.

THE RED LION.—LOVERS' QUARRELS, AND THE USUAL RESULT.

My light of life! ah, tell me why,
That pouting lip and alter'd eye?

BYRON.

Julia.—I have been content to bear from you, what pride and delicacy would have forbad me from another. I will not upbraid you, by repeating how you have trifled with my sincerity.

Falkland.—I confess it all! yet hear——

The Rivals.

EARLY next morning I visited the old gentleman in his chamber, and found that notwithstanding the agitation he suffered the preceding night, he had rested well. I told him I was obliged to leave for town directly after breakfast,—promised to dine with him in Clarges-street, and took charge of a packet for his soli-

citor, which I undertook to deliver before twelve o'clock. I left him; and on descending to the parlour, found my sweet Emily already there.

Never was happiness more visible upon a human countenance than that which brightened hers; joy laughed in her sparkling eyes, and dimpled her rosy cheek. Phœbe remarked the alteration that restored tranquillity and sanctioned love had wrought; and I too thought Emily more beautiful than ever.

"Plague on that crack-brained cousin with the demoniac by-name!" said the landlady of the Cross Keys; "what mischief his iniquities have caused us all! I lost my rest—Miss Emily her roses—the old gentleman his temper—Sedley a large behest;—the only gainer is yourself, captain."

"Certainly my friend Jack contrived to make a glorious *brouillerie* among us. But it is over,—we have escaped, and the only sufferer is that scoundrel Sedley."

"I am glad," said Phœbe, "he is finally discarded. I hated him for his ugliness,—yet that was wrong; but there is a coldness about that fellow which makes a villain doubly dan-

gerous. Take care of him," she said, turning to me; "he will not lose a rich legacy by you without exacting deep revenge if he can obtain it."

I smiled. "Phœbe, he will never trouble me. Pshaw!—he is below contempt."

"You are too secure," she replied. "Mean scoundrels are more formidable than bold and open enemies."

"Well, well, time flies. Emily, I am obliged to start for town immediately: what can I do for you till we meet at dinner?"

"Start for town! Will you not accompany us? And can two or three hours be of such moment?"

"Why yes—when a lady is concerned a man cannot be too particular; and I have an appointment to keep."

"With whom?"

"The prettiest girl in Portland-place."

"And for what purpose?"

"Only to drive her to Streatham."

"Now, on my life!" said Phœbe angrily, "this is intolerable. Who is the lady?"

"Had you stopped in Berners-street fifteen

minutes, as I wanted you to do, you would have seen her."

"Ha! was she the person you expected, and for whom I was at first mistaken?"

"The same:"—Emily's cheeks flushed;—"and a more punctual gentlewoman never indited a *billet-doux* on satin paper."

"Is she handsome?—is she agreeable?"

"Pleasing in her manners—exceedingly pretty—and ——"

"And what?" said mistress and attendant in duetto.

"I never met a woman more decidedly in love!"

Phœbe blazed up, and Emily looked broken-hearted.

"With whom?"

"With Jack the Devil!" and I caught the sweet girl to my heart, and kissed away the tear that was stealing down her cheek. When I had told the story of my kinsman's conquest, Phœbe laughed at her young mistress.

"You are a provoking wretch!" she said,—"torturing Miss Emily so, and making me appear unamiable, by teasing me into some-

thing like bad temper. But I 'll plague you for this !"

The horn sounded,—up came the Tally-Ho,—the waiter threw my carpet bag to the guard,—I snatched a kiss from Emily—boxed Phœbe's ears—jumped up behind the coachman—turned the corner, and Emily and the Verulam Arms disappeared.

I reached London in good time—left the coach—drove to Berners-street—despatched my grandfather's packet to the solicitor, and sent for Jack's phaeton to drive Miss Moreland to Streatham, to receive the fealty of my repentant kinsman. It wanted but a quarter of the appointed hour, and I waited for the carriage impatiently, when the waiter showed up Colonel O'Donnel.

We shook hands.

"Ah ! glad to see you. How have you been since ? Left our friend in tolerable spirits—very anxious for your return. Drove round by Dulwich,—Neville convalescent—wound healing fast—speaks handsomely of your cousin. Just from an interview with the baron,—delivered a message, which he declined—gave

him two hours, of which fifty-seven minutes ten seconds are unexpired, to return securities, or fight your kinsman. If he demur, I shall proclaim his cowardice, and flog him in the Park—and, from certain and indubitable proofs in my possession, I shall then submit the matter to a court of honour, and show that Captain Blake was cheated by a blackleg. Ah! I see your phaeton—when will you be home?"

"At half-past three. Jack will be with me, for I have settled that matter with the Philistines."

"Egad! happy to find it has been accommodated."

"I want you here particularly, Colonel; I need a friend."

"Don't name it—glad to hear it—quite ready,—I'll do the thing with pleasure—or, if you prefer your cousin, I'll act *en second*, and counsel and assist."

"I think, my dear colonel, I shall not exactly need a fighting friend; but it is a comfort to know where one can find him if required."

"Ah! that it is;" and the little man sighed heavily. "Letters to-day from Ireland,—very

distressing indeed. Poor Bob Grady,—good a fellow as ever touched a feather spring,—shot dead, and by a novice—a man that never burnt powder before !"

" Very dreadful !" I said, fully convinced notwithstanding, that the gentleman who pinked Bob " had done the state some service."

" Dreadful indeed !—He was murdered, sir ! Stuck in the corner of a stack-yard—sun in his eyes—and the fool, his second, unable to load a pistol. Why, sir, though Bob executed beautifully, the ball, for want of powder, dropped within three paces of his own foot. Poor fellow ! in what splendid style he shot Counsellor O'Flinn ! An election quarrel—mob unfriendly —sheriff in the next field—priest cursing in one corner—magistrate roaring out the riot act in another—and, in all the *bruit*, Bob popped his bullet through the aorta, and the lawyer never kicked. Poor dear Bob !"

I left the little colonel in the middle of his lament for Mr. Grady, and drove to Albemarle-street, where, at Madam Fancourt's temple of fashion, I found Jack's inamorata ready to accompany me. I took her up—stopped at Craven-

street — apprized the cynic that he would be required at four, and turned the horses' heads towards Streatham.

"Well, Captain Blake," said my fair companion, as we drove along the Waterloo-road, "if anything were wanting to establish my feminine propriety in your estimation after my visit to Berners-street, would it not be this prudent expedition to a country inn?"

"Why, 'faith, Miss Moreland, in the days of our grandmothers, people might have been found prudish enough to discountenance these unceremonious interviews: Sir Charles Grandison would have shaken his head, and Miss Clarissa Harlowe required unlacing and volatile salts."

"And," she continued with a sigh, "if the man were worth all this risk and trouble!— Now, do think what a blunderer he is! The packet he sent me by you contained a lock of hair black enough to belong to a daughter of Judah; and the miniature was not a portrait of my fair self, but a faithful likeness of that plain-featured gentlewoman, the army clothier's daughter, whom, as I already told you, it pleased to fall in love with your feather-headed cousin."

I laughed—it was so like what Jack the Devil would do.

"What a bungler he must be!" I said; "how could he make such a palpable mistake?"

"Easily," replied the lady: "the fellow has, no doubt, a drawer full of *billets-doux*, and pictures to supply an exhibition: my name commencing with the same letter—the packets lay contiguous—and he mistook them in his hurry—"

"Or rather his grief;—tears and twilight obscured his vision."

"No, no," she said, smiling, "Jack is none of your lachrymose lovers; and in whatever school he acquired his philosophy, certainly it was not the weeping one. Heigh-ho! sometimes I think that mine is a desperate venture, and wonder I can

> 'Prize the flame,
> Which seems, as marshy vapours move,
> To flit along from dame to dame—
> An ignis-fatuus gleam of love.'

Well, it is too late, I fear, to redeem my folly; and there is no remedy but—"

"Matrimony—I know that is the word you want;—pray, when do you commence the course?"

She laughed.—"That requires sage and deliberate consideration."

"Make me your consulting lawyer."

"Well, sir—but no hurry, if you please."

"Certainly not—none in the world.—If you and Jack are clear of the stones by twelve to-morrow, it will do."

"To-morrow!—Lord! what does the man mean? Why a month would not make preparations for the journey."

"Which preparations are already made. I'll wager twenty kisses your trunks are packed; and your own maid shall prove it."

"Why, thou most impudent of Irishmen! do you suppose that I would runaway with a man that never asked me?"

"But I did—and you consented."

"I disclaim the consent."

"And I'll affirm it in any court of Cupid. Will you deny that you ordered a close bonnet at Fancourt's, to hide your pretty face from curious innkeepers on the great North-road?"

"I won't run away this fortnight."

"You will, before half the time. I wish I could go with you. I shall be obliged to travel

through the regular road of Doctor's Commons ; or, if the old man takes it into his head, like Lydia Languish, 'be cried three times in a country church, and have an unmannerly fat clerk ask the consent of every butcher in the parish to join John Blake and Emily Clifden.'"

We drove to the Red Lion, where Jack had bivouacked during his tribulation, and were shown to apartments which were unoccupied, as the gallant captain was walking in the garden. Jack's "great chamber," like the best parlour of a country inn, was clean, comfortable, crowded with furniture, and the general depository for all the valuable portion of household goods. The plate and glass were displayed in a bookcase, and the china drawn up in treble files upon an old-fashioned bureau : needlework, race-horses, sea-fights, and stuffed birds, ornamented the walls and chimneypiece. The table, however, was the greatest curiosity ; it showed that Jack had been preparing for some grand movement, as it was covered with sheets and shreds of paper, on which sundry epistles had been commenced. I desired the maid to inform the gentleman "that his cousin had

arrived," but not to mention that a lady was his companion.

"How comfortable Master Jack has managed that his place of banishment should be!"

The lady pouted.

"Had we driven round the metropolis for a week, we could not have selected a pleasanter retirement."

"I suppose not: but why did he stop here? The landlady is very handsome, and the attendant *piquante* and pretty."

"You are right,—excellent specimens of alehouse beauty. But let us see how my kinsman has been employed. Ha!

'Here 's much to do with hate, but more with love.'

Let us examine these fragments, and they will exhibit a pretty accurate picture of what is passing in the writer's thoughts."

"Would this be fair?" said Miss Moreland.

"Oh, perfectly. Listen, and I 'll name you Jack's correspondents before I reach the third line."

"'*An unfortunate affair of honour, which I will explain at Castle Blake*—'—Ah! that is for my uncle Manus—put it away. '*Sir—if a scoun-*

drel abuses the confidence of a gentleman, to plunder him at play—'—That 's the Baron, and no mistake.—'*When this reaches you, one who with all his faults loved devotedly, will be in another land*—'—(Miss Moreland sighed heavily:)—'*Yes, Sophia, I leave England, wretched and heart-broken!*'—Can you possibly guess who Jack the Devil means?"

"Do go on, you provoking man!"

"Ay—'WRETCHED AND HEART-BROKEN'—I think we stopped there—'*and under Bolivar and a burning sun*—'"

"God forbid!" ejaculated the director's daughter.

"Ay, God forbid!—Jack could never bear heat—he 's too intemperate."

"You abominable man!—Go on."

"Well, we left him under 'a burning sun'—Ay, here he goes—'*find the only boon I wish—a soldier's grave.*' Now I really think Jack the Devil is light in his demands upon the Liberator. '*When I am gone*'"—she sobbed, and I laughed—

"You cruel wretch!" she muttered, as she snatched the paper, and read with triumphant emphasis a passage, in which the writer declared

that his constancy was eternal, and his mental tranquillity ruined for ever—'*the hand I plighted thee shall never be another's—the lip which thine has pressed*——'"

"Stop—for heaven's sake! that 'hand and lip' passage is too bad; there is no standing Jack's heroics."

"Why, thou man of snow! is it because you cannot feel an enduring passion that you laugh at love in others?" said the lady warmly.

"Come, my fair friend, step in here; I must gradually break the glad tidings of your visit, or sudden joy might be fatal to one, whose nerves are so exquisitely sensitive as that constant swain, my cousin."

"Ah, poor fellow! I am dying to tell him he is pardoned."

"You shall see him in a moment. His window looks upon the garden; doubtless there he walks, Romeo-like, with folded arms and downcast eyes,

> With tears augmenting the fresh morning's dew,
> Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs."

We peeped over the sun-blind: beneath us was the neat and well-kept flower knot of the

Lion, separated from the adjoining paddock by a holly fence; and there was Jack the Devil certainly, but, "Oh sin, oh sorrow!" not as we had anticipated, in deep despondency or sombre meditation, but in his flowered dressing-gown, lounging across the hedge, and flirting with the parson's maid, who it appeared was the possessor of the adjacent premises. Sophia and I looked at each other;—I laughed outright, and she pouted and stamped passionately on the carpet.

"Poor fellow! I think even at this distance I can detect a shade of sadness on his countenance. Well, I did wrong him; he has the 'heart-broken' look he talked of in his letter, and other symptoms of 'enduring love.'"

"I never, *never* will forgive him!" replied the director's daughter.

"Oh, yes, you will. It's all a mistake; Jack has been remarkably fond of children from his cradle, and hence his innocent partiality for nursemaids."

"See, how provokingly familiar the fellow is!"

"Not at all,—I tell you it's the child he's fondling."

"I tell you it is the nurse,—did I not see him tap the gipsy's cheek!"

"Well, he tapped the wrong one. But look, our pretty barmaid delivers my message—Here he comes."

"Ay, and coquetting with her too, as I am a true woman!"

"Nonsense! he's only ordering dinner."

"I won't bear this, positively! He may go to Kamschatka if he please, and it shall not cost me a tear."

"Right,—let him be off to the Brazils. For my own part, I wish he was safe in South America."

"You are laughing at me, you heartless man! but you shall see how coolly I shall discard him."

"Ay, by all means keep your temper, and will you unpack the trunks, and countermand the bonnet? But I hear Jack's foot:" and I entered the sitting-room as he came in from the lobby.

"Ah, John, I am so glad you are come! I have been looking for you impatiently. Have you any news—any letter—any message?"

"Why, nothing very particular;—Neville is out of danger, and James Daly returned for Galway."

"Did you see Miss Moreland?"

"Yes, and a very pretty girl she is."

"Have you brought me an answer?"

"I have only a verbal one;—she wonders what control she could have over Miss Mardyn; and says, so far as she is concerned, that you may wear her picture to eternity."

"What can she mean? Good heavens! I must have sent the wrong packet in my hurry."

"Well, by the next messenger send the right one. But you told me that you were going to Ireland; now here you hint something about 'Bolivar and a burning sun.'"

"Why, surely you did not read my letters?"

"And what would you have me do while you were philandering over the fence, with that smart abigail in the pink ribands?"

"Indeed, John, you wrong me. I am in no humour for flirtation: the girl is young and pretty, and I was giving her some good advice."

"But why impress it as you did?—there was no occasion to paw her across the hedge: I

thought, from what you say there about 'a broken heart and South America,' that you would have been packing your traps, and not moralizing with nursery-maids."

"Now, John, I am in no humour for jesting. It's devilish unkind on your part;—were you half as wretched as I, on my soul! I would not trifle with your misery."

Jack's back was to the chamber-door, and there stood Sophia, shaking her head at me, and ready to forgive him.

"Well, I won't mention the maid;—go on, Jack."

"Did Sophia send me no message?"

"Nothing that I can particularly remember.—Oh yes! she said something civil about 'future success and a short passage.'"

"And did she not write?"

"Not a line;—she would, I fancy, had she not been going out to drive; and as one of the horses had caught cold——"

"By heaven! all women are the same—I'll never trust another;" and Jack strode through the room so heavily, that the china rattled on

the bureau. "She cast me off; *she*—the only woman I ever loved, the only one I could ever have been happy with. John," he said as he turned suddenly to me, "it's all ended—I am superlatively wretched—I'll shoot that blackguard baron in the morning, and myself afterwards."

"No, don't. It's a bore to lie in a public-house, for all the coal-porters in the parish to examine you, with a dozen tradesmen and the neighbouring apothecaries tumbling you back and forward, to satisfy themselves how you came by your end."

"All I could bear;—villany from man—what matters it? one could cut a scoundrel's throat. But falsehood, and from Sophia! Oh, God! that she whom I loved so fondly could desert me without a pang!"

Jack was desperately overcome, and leaned his head within his hands upon the table. Sophia was standing in the door-way already in tears, and dying to fly into his arms;—she stole forward on tiptoe, playfully patted his cheek,—he looked up, and caught her to his

heart. I, of course, levanted to order the horses round, and in the interim examine the *locale* of the Red Lion.

When I returned, Jack arraigned me of misprision. "Ah, John! I thought you would not league against me with Sophia, read my letters, and——"

"Disturb your homily to the nurse-maid."

"I forgive you," said Jack the Devil; "the dear girl consents to become mine, and to-morrow night we start for Gretna."

"Indeed? Miss Moreland, is this true?"

"Yes—I said something unguardedly."

I kissed my pretty cousin. Her lover stared.

"Don't be jealous, man! She owed me twenty, Jack, and you may take the other nineteen."

We drove into town—left Sophia in Albemarle-street,—I was set down at "mine own inn," and we separated, he to look after his own affairs, and I to complete my destinies with the old man, and win the "lady of my love."

CHAPTER XI.

THE INVESTIGATION.—DINNER IN CLARGES-STREET.

Well, 'fore George! you shan't say I do things by halves. Son-in-law, thou looks like a hearty rogue, so we'll have a night on't. 'Ecod! I don't know how I came to be in so good a humour.

SHERIDAN.

TRUE to his appointment, Colonel O'Donnel was punctual to a minute; and, with my friend Jack, we proceeded from Berners-street to Lincoln's-inn-fields, to meet Mr. Harrison, and witness the establishment of Sedley's innocence or guilt. We were set down at the solicitor's, and conducted to the drawing-room, where we found my grandfather seated in an easy chair, to determine of his heirs presumptive which was the real Simon Pure. I presented my friends in due form, and he received them graciously;

although I fancied he cast a suspicious side-look at Jack, to ascertain whether he was quite safe under the same roof with one whose exploits and cognomen, in his estimation, were equally diabolic. In a few minutes the cynic made his appearance: he too was introduced to the old gentleman; and, as he mentioned that Evelyn and Williams were below, we only paused for the culprit's arrival, to proceed with this our "delicate investigation."

A general conversation, in which my grandfather freely joined, ensued; and, considering his characteristic shyness with strangers, he was not only agreeable, but unusually communicative. The clock struck four; a coach stopped, —a loud knock was heard,—somebody came up stairs,—of course it was the accused. Every eye turned to the door—it opened, and not Sedley, but the solicitor, added himself to the cabinet council then and there assembled.

"Have you," said Mr. Harrison, as he addressed himself to me, "brought evidence to substantiate the grave charges you preferred last night against the person to whom I have been guardian?"

"I have, sir," I replied. "My friend Aylmer will best explain what the delinquencies are which have been imputed to Mr. Sedley. I should rather, however, if it meets your approval, postpone the inquiry until the accused is present, and afford him a fair opportunity to exculpate himself if he can."

"Fairly spoken," said the old man.

"If you wait for Mr. Sedley's attendance here," said the solicitor, "I fear, gentlemen, you will wait in vain. I have been to his reputed residence, and sought him besides in every place where it was likely to make him out, and my search was idle. He is nowhere to be found; I could learn no tidings of him but indifferent ones. His chambers are locked up — his lodgings stripped and deserted—and nothing is left behind, save a few useless articles of old furniture, which the landlord has seized for rent."

"Have you ascertained," said my grandfather, "how the stock transactions stand?"

"I have, sir: every sixpence has from time to time been sold out, and the last five hundred transferred and disposed of yesterday."

"These are indeed," said the old man, "heavy tidings; and to the crime of ingratitude, forgery has been added,—a capital felony following a breach of trust."

"It is too true, sir," replied the solicitor.

"I feel," said my grandfather mournfully, "for my old friend's son; and, God knows, I would give the sum twice told which the wretched man has robbed me of, that he had died in childhood, and left the world without disgracing the once pure name of his lamented father. What has become of the delinquent? Is it conjectured where he is?"

"It is supposed, sir," said the solicitor in reply, "that he has left the country. There are bills in circulation which he uttered with forged acceptances, and, if apprehended, his life must pay the penalty. Indeed, his character appears to have been for years declining; and, latterly, it is said that he associated entirely with swindlers and gamblers of the lowest caste."

"That," said Aylmer, "there are persons below-stairs to prove."

"It is almost unnecessary," replied the old man; "but, as evidences are here, let them be

called up;—I will fully satisfy myself of his villany, and then endeavour to forget that such a wretch existed."

Aylmer left the room, and immediately returned, accompanied by the *roué* Evelyn and the husband of Lucinda Daly.

Their statements were short, and fully corroborated the worst suspicions against Sedley. For years he had lived by play, and when unsuccessful, procured money by forging his benefactor's name, and selling out portions of his stock. And yet, notwithstanding his crimes were known to many, from the seclusion of Mr. Harrison's life, years might have rolled over, and his villany remained undetected by his guardian. The dividends, when due, were regularly transmitted to my grandfather,—the defalcation of the principal consequently remained undiscovered; and had the old man died, Sedley's forgeries would have been unknown, and he would have succeeded to a large proportion of his guardian's wealth.

"Should I not be thankful," said Mr. Harrison, "that I lived long enough to ascertain the villain's infamy? my natural heir might other-

wise have been despoiled of his inheritance, and my adopted daughter sacrificed to a wretch who would have ruined the being united to him."

"No—that could not have happened," said Williams, "Sedley is already married."

"Married!" exclaimed the old man, "and to whom?"

"To one who has for three years resided in your own house."

"Impossible!"

"It is true. Who introduced Annette into your family, sir?"

"The villain Sedley."

"Then, sir, he sent you his own wife."

"Traitress!" said the old gentleman, "she shall not be there another hour!"

"She is already gone, sir. This blow-up has been expected, and she was prepared to leave you at a moment's notice. Her trunks were removed to my house privately, and before I left home to keep my appointment with Mr. Aylmer, she arrived in a hackney-coach to fetch them away."

"Good heaven! what could the fellow's object be? Why place his own wife in a menial station, and why degrade her as a spy?"

"Service was to her no degradation," said Williams; "that was her proper place. Netty was a barmaid,—and, some years since, a very pretty one. Sedley frequented the house she lived at: he fancied her; and when seduction failed,—for though without a spark of principle, her cunning enabled her to outwit him,—in a moment of intoxication he married her. Mutual advantage rendered it necessary that the marriage should remain unpublished; and though each, before a month passed, hated the other, the interests of both induced them to keep their own secrets, until your death should render concealment unnecessary."

"I am indeed astonished! What a base and treacherous scoundrel! Well, well, punishment will follow fast upon his crimes."

"He will be a vagabond for life," observed the cynic.

"He will be outlawed for fraudulent bankruptcy," said the lawyer.

"And debarred from gentlemanly satisfaction," said the little colonel, "even though horsewhipped in the street."

"He is gone," said my grandfather. "He has robbed me of six thousand pounds; and yet, for the whole money, I would not meet the deceiver."

"Meet him!" exclaimed Colonel O'Donnel: "that, sir, is totally out of the question,—don't think of it—the fellow is excluded from a gentleman's prerogative, and out of the pale of honour altogether. Why, sir, not a man in England would take a message for you."

"Take a message for me!" and the old man stared. I burst into a fit of laughing.

"The colonel means, sir, that if you have indulged in any hopes of shooting Mr. Sedley, you must abandon the intention."

"Ah! I understand it now;" and my grandfather smiled. "No, no, colonel; I'll not attempt it. But these gentlemen are wanted no longer,"—and he pointed to the *roué* and his companion,—"they may retire—for I wish to speak to you, John, in presence of your friends."

Aylmer whispered something to his evidences,

and they rose to leave the room. At the door Williams made a stop.

"Captain Blake," he said, "take care of Sedley. He was at best a dangerous, and now he is a desperate scoundrel. If he can, he will take deep revenge for this detection; and if his purse is not exhausted, believe me, he has agents enough to effect his purpose, unless you are more cautious and less daring than you are said to be."

I thanked him for his warning—gave an assurance that it should be attended to—and promising to see him in a day or two, he left us and followed Evelyn.

"You must be on your guard," said the short commander; "fellows like Sedley are more formidable than bold enemies, and cowards more truculent than brave men. Do not expose yourself unnecessarily; and when you are out at night, take care and have the marking-irons in your pocket. If the villain cross you,"—and the colonel drew out his box,—"shoot him without a question."—Mr. Harrison shuddered. —"Fellows of that sort I would despatch with as little ceremony as tread a rat's life out. I

will give you an exquisite case of pocket-pistols —Joe Manton's best. With one—you'll see it scratched across the barrel—I shot a footpad, who stopped me returning from dinner at the Pigeon House." The little man took a deliberate and self-satisfied pinch, while my grandfather eyed him with one of his suspicious glances.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I have in your presence to propose certain terms to my grandson; and if they be acceded to, I shall at once declare him heir to my estates. Attend, John."—I bowed deferentially.—"In the first place, you must leave the army, for my property requires a resident master."

"If such, sir," I replied, "be your wish, I shall agree to it."

"The second stipulation I make is, that you add my name to yours, and bear the arms of Harrison."

"On that score," said Aylmer, "there can be no difference; as, not three days since, he talked of turning Anabaptist, merely to obtain the benefit of another name." And he looked archly at Jack the Devil.

"What say you, John?"

"That in this, as in every other request you may be pleased to make, sir, my obedience shall be dependant on your pleasure."

"My third and last demand," said the old gentleman, "I must postpone till after dinner;—and, gentlemen, as my grandchild has granted my behests so freely, will you further oblige me by sharing my quiet meal? It is my first request, and I trust it will be conceded."

Aylmer and Jack acquiesced immediately. The little man declared his anxiety to oblige, but he was out of spirits—he had lost a dear friend.

"Indeed!" said my grandfather; "and was his death sudden, colonel?"

"Oh, yes, very much so—pistol-ball through the great artery.—Poor dear Bob!"

"Well, well, colonel, ours will be a sober feast."

"Heigh-ho! sir, I shall attend you. Ah! did you know what society lost in Bob Grady!—sweet a fellow as ever touched a trigger—I am certain it must have been the second's fault."

"And," said the old gentleman, with a quiet and caustic smile, "does much in the conduct of honourable affairs depend upon these gentlemen?"

"Everything, sir!" returned the short commander:—"half the men nicked, are shot by bringing bunglers to the ground. I remember myself, sir, the first time I ever went out friend I won the toss, and stuck my man, through ignorance, into the angle of a hedge, where, by God's providence and a thousand pities, the scoundrel was not shot—for he turned out a coward afterwards."

"Well, gentlemen, we meet one hour hence at dinner. I have some business with my friend,"—and he pointed to the solicitor. "Farewell!"

As we drove to Aylmer's lodgings, the transactions of the day were discussed; and, as in duty bound, I thanked the cynic for his valuable assistance, to which I attributed the fortunate issue of the late investigation.

"Well, gentlemen," said my counsellor, "I am delighted at the result; my diplomacy is over—'Othello's occupation's gone'—and, faith!

considering the places I visited, and the scoundrels I consorted with, I am glad my agency has terminated. You are both"—and he addressed himself to Jack and me—"tolerably clear of scrapes and difficulties; may I inquire how long it is your good pleasure to continue so?"

"My *escapades* are over, Aylmer—I am too grateful for safe deliverance to tax Dame Fortune and yourself over much. As to my friend and kinsman——"

"You may include him in the general reformation," said Jack the Devil. "One exploit more, and my career shall close like my cousin's, and I will never furnish another paragraph to 'The Morning Post.'"

"Bravely resolved, gentlemen! Eschew barons and baronesses, street rows and *ecarté*—the less you hop the better—and, above all things, avoid broken panels—or damaged woodwork will prove fatal to the family, no matter whether the accident fall out in Long's Hotel or the Barracks of Kilcommon."

At six we met Mr. Harrison in Clarges-street, and Emily was introduced to my friends. Annette's mysterious disappearance had, of

course, created a general surprise; as my grandfather, unwilling that Sedley's delinquencies should be bruited to the world, had merely intimated that she was discharged for some misconduct, which it was not his pleasure to particularize.

It was strange how well the old man bore the mental and bodily exertions of the last few days, and I remarked it to Aylmer. The cynic shook his head—

"Ay! but it will kill him," he replied in a whisper. "It is the last gleaming of the lamp of life—circumstances have overtaxed his energies—the effort is too powerful for the old man, and nature must sink."

Dinner passed—the dessert was set down—and the servants retired. The old gentleman filled a glass with wine and water, and called upon his guests for a bumper. I observed his lips tremble, and, as the decanter came round, his agitation visibly increased. He was, no doubt, preparing for something that required an effort; and to one whose frame was so feeble it was a painful task.

"I should rise, gentlemen," he said, in falter-

ing tones; "alas! I have not strength to do it."

Emily got up to leave us, but her guardian motioned that she should remain; she acquiesced, and Mr. Harrison continued:

"I have in your presence, gentlemen, asked from my son—for such I may term him now—two requests, and they have been freely granted. The third, however, is wanting. I postponed stating it till now: another's assent is required, or the object of my wishes would be incomplete. To-morrow, at twelve, I will entreat you to favour me once more with your company, and witness the execution of a deed that vests in my acknowledged heir the estates and domains of Stainsbury: but it goes to him conditionally. Come here, John." I rose and obeyed him, while he took Miss Clifden's hand and placed it within mine.—"This is the sole encumbrance—and now, God bless you both!"

The scene was painful;—Emily burst into tears, and hung upon the old man's bosom.—The cynic was not unmoved—the little colonel's coldness in exciting situations was visibly disturbed—and even Jack the Devil threatened

to become a weeper. I gently detached my beautiful mistress from my grandfather's embrace.

"There, John," he said, "conduct her to the drawing-room, and let me and our good friends know on your return when we shall attend you to the church. Recollect, my children, how feeble my mortal tenure is; and the sooner I am permitted to witness the union of those I love, and must shortly leave, the better."

I led her from the parlour. In a few minutes our bridal day was settled—for I had no artificial delicacy to combat, no affected modesty to overcome. Emily, the child of innocence, yielded to my ardent solicitations—her guardian's wishes were obeyed—and the third morning was appointed for Emily to kneel with me at the altar, and become "mine own" for ever.

CHAPTER XII.

THE COLONEL'S ELOPEMENT—A STRANGE EPISTLE.

There had I projected one of the most sentimental elopements!

The Rivals.

Fye, my lord, fy! a soldier, and afeard?

Macbeth.

I RETURNED to the old man and his guests, announced the success of my interview with Emily, and received the hearty congratulations of all.

Mr. Harrison appeared particularly gratified.

"And now, gentlemen," he said, "may I plead the privilege of age, and leave you under the care of a younger and more enduring bacchanal? Ring for Robert."

I did so; — the attendant came.

"Give me your arm, John. Some months ago one was sufficient; but now I need a second supporter. Gentlemen, don't spare the claret: when I was at your ages, so much

business as we have this day transacted would have been a fair excuse for an additional flask. We meet at noon to-morrow. Good night !"

I assisted him to his chamber, and, at his own request, left him to Robert's care, and hastened to rejoin the company below.

My friends were in high spirits;—Aylmer, at the complete success of his stratagems and intrigue to detect Sedley's villany; Jack, I presume, on being a Benedict in expectancy; and the little colonel, from the perusal of a letter the footman had delivered while I was in attendance on my grandfather. The epistle which caused such pleasure to the commander was written in barbarous characters, and, as the cynic observed, " brief as woman's love ;" but in the enclosure the charm appeared to lie.

" Here, my dear fellow;" and Colonel O'Donnel presented a paper to my kinsman. Jack hastily unfolded it; it was his own acknowledgment to the baron for a thousand !

" Why, what means this ?" said he with the evil *sobriquet*.

" Nothing," replied the short commander, " that cannot be readily explained. You gave me, my dear boy, in the conduct of a certain

delicate affair, a *carte blanche*, and I used it freely. I insisted, on your part, for immediate satisfaction; and the baron, on his, for instant payment. According to my ideas, the thing was to be settled by the pistol; according to Hartzmann's, a cheque upon a banker would do it far better. Short negotiations are best: I declared that I would post him in the club-houses, and flog him the first opportunity; and, as accident had furnished me with the certain knowledge that he had been in early life sentenced to the galleys for a fraud, and evaded the sentence by some underhand influence with a royal favourite, I used it on the occasion—gave him three hours for deliberation—and *voilà le résultat*."

"Never had a brace of sinners such inimitable advisers!" I exclaimed. "Ah, Jack, what do you not owe the colonel? For me, were I to commit a burglary, Aylmer would establish a clear *alibi*, and save me from the noose."

"Indeed, gentlemen," said the cynic, "I thought you both bade fair enough to achieve that honourable end: but your finale will be common-place, after all. The blind gentlewoman will bring you through—and, in the *dénouement* of your short and virtuous careers, a hymeneal will

supersede the hempen catastrophe I had once anticipated. But now, as your history"—and he turned to me—"'is well-nigh done,' may I inquire when a similar result may be expected to attend this exemplary gentleman?"

"Aylmer, you know among friends that concealment is unnecessary," responded Jack the Devil; "and if fortune smiles, and money can procure post-horses—barring ups-and-downs upon the road—I shall precede my worthy cousin, and show him a virtuous example."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the little colonel.

"Yes. I had a letter before I left Long's from the dear girl: she tells me, John, that her traps are now at your hotel; and I am desired to have all ready at eight o'clock to-morrow evening, two or three miles from town. It is arranged that you shall receive Sophia and her maid, and duly transfer both to my safe custody."

"Thank you for the preference"—I replied. "And could you not carry off a director's daughter, Jack, but I must be brought in as principal in the misdemeanour? Send Aylmer, or O'Donnel; both are adepts in love affairs, and up to mischief in all its varieties."

"Excuse me," said the cynic, "anything you

please but abducting heiresses. I have a pious horror of the Chancellor. Probably the colonel——"

"Pardon me, my dear fellow," said the little man, as he sipped a glass of claret leisurely; "it 's not in my line. If either of the gentlemen want a message taken, I 'll carry it, were it to the Master of the Rolls,—ay, or the Speaker of the House of Commons."

"Why, I did imagine, certainly, that your joint counsel might be serviceable to my friend Jack."

"Mine," said the cynic, "would only go to implore him to avoid loose linchpins and lame horses."

"And, in the event of pursuit," rejoined the little colonel, "shoot the leader, my dear boy, before you fire at the postilion. The worst consequence that can result is only paying for a post-horse."

"But, colonel," said I, "for one so perfectly *au fait* in all honourable matters, how comes it that you eschew '*affaires de cœur*' so religiously?"

"Why, faith," replied the short commander, "because the only one I ever was engaged in turned out a decided failure."

"Indeed, colonel!"

"Ay," said the little man, "and I 'll tell it to you in a few words. When I got my troop in the 17th Lights, the regiment was quartered in Birmingham. Tom Barry, who was killed, poor fellow! at Toulouse, was then my senior sub, and through him I was introduced to the family of a wealthy spur-maker, who was reputed to be worth a plum, and had an only daughter to inherit it. Now the young lady had a fancy for hussars, and was moreover tired of the thrall of a maiden aunt and the *surveillance* of a young governess, although the said *gouvernante* was the prettiest girl in the town. After the customary formalities, Miss Julia agreed to elope with me—become Mrs. O'Donnel first, and ask the spurrier's consent afterwards. All went on beautifully, and as the old tradesman frequented a weekly club, we named the night when he would be engaged there for a bolt to Gretna Green."—The colonel sighed heavily

and filled his glass anew.—"I had," he continued, "unfortunately an Irish servant, and employed him to provide a trustworthy postilion. From an accursed nationality, Pat Rooney engaged a second cousin of his own, who, he said, was 'deaf as a post, but drove like the devil.' The hour approached—I for concealment threw on a trooper's cloak, and, determined to take Father Time by the forelock, was at the corner of the appointed street a full half-hour before that specified by my Dulcinea in her last billet.

"Well, gentlemen, the night was dark as Erebus, and before I had taken a third turn on the flagway, up came the lady of my love with a carpet-bag under her arm! She was closely muffled, and I rolled in my roquelaure to the nose. Pat asked no questions, but bundled bag and baggage into the postchaise—I followed—Rooney shut the door, waved his hand to his second cousin, and off we went 'like a hunt.'

"This was the trying moment. The fair one threw herself upon my breast, and sobbed audibly. 'Silence in love' is more expressive 'than words however witty;' and, till we

cleared the town, she hung upon my bosom in speechless tenderness. On we went, for the deaf one drove like a whirlwind. 'Speak, my sweet girl!' I faintly ejaculated, 'and let your adorer listen to that silver voice again.'

"'You have caught cold, my love,' said my inamorata. 'Lord! how hoarse you are!—Ah! Tom, what a sacrifice I have made! This is the second place I have lost by you!'

"Hell and furies! it was a strange voice. —'*Hoarse!—the second place!*—why, who the devil are you?' I exclaimed.

"'Murder! I'm ruined!' was the reply: 'stop the carriage, or I'll swear my life against you!' And she threw down the glass.

"'Ay, stop!' I bellowed, 'or I'll prosecute you, madam, for abduction.' And down dropped the second window.

"'Stop! for the love of God!' she cried.

"'Pull up! or I'll blow your brains out!' I shouted. Though we could have been heard easily a mile off, our united screams fell feebly on the tympanum of the deaf driver. He looked about; I was gesticulating in a rage,

and she exclamatory as the heroine of a melo-drame. The bothered scoundrel thought we apprehended a pursuit.

" 'Arrah, take things asy, jewels! —don't be afeerd, for the divil won't catch yees.' Down came the thong, and as we had falling-ground, off we went like lightning.

" To stop him was an idle attempt—nothing but a pistol-bullet would have done it; and, as he carried us away, we had time to come to an explanation. The governess, and not the pupil, was my *compagnon de voyage*. She had arranged an elopement with Tom Barry, unknown to the spur-maker's heiress;—Tom was never punctual in his life — I was before time, and he after it, and hence our mutual disappointment.

" Well, gentlemen, you must hear the finale. Barry was enraged at me for taking off his mistress, and I was naturally savage at losing through him a fortune and a wife. The business was referred to a couple of gentlemen, who asked no questions, but adjourned to the race-course, where we interchanged shots, were both grazed, interrupted by the civil powers, and

bound over to be pacific. We had then leisure to inquire into the affair, and the thing was accommodated by mutual explanations. But, alas! the mischief was irremediable. The spurrier despatched his daughter to the country, and placed her under the *surveillance* of an old maid, whose domicile was impregnable; and the *gouvernante* lost her character and place, by a deaf driver and a dilatory gallant."

"No wonder," said the cynic, when the short commander had concluded his narrative, "that you have an objection to forced marches on Gretna, after so serious a mishap; and I think our friend of the Fusileers must be aide-de-camp to-morrow to his worthy kinsman, the ex-captain of the Galway."

"I suppose I must," I replied. "But will you, Aylmer, undertake a less hazardous duty for me?"

"Let me hear what the service is, and then I will answer you."

"Fair enough. I promised to assist your old acquaintance Lucy to carry her hopeful helpmate to America; will you see the money

disbursed in securing their passage, providing necessaries for their voyage, and all the requisite etcætera?"

"Well, in this affair, I agree to be your representative. Poor Lucy! I remember when she was lady of the ascendant.

> Holy Saint Francis! what a change is here!
> Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear,
> So soon forgotten?

It gets late, and I shall be moving."

"And so shall I," said Jack the Devil. "I must sleep a sufficiency to-night to carry me 'over the border.'"

All took their leave, and I joined Emily in the drawing-room, where she was expecting me to say "good night." Lovers are tedious in their adieux, and the clock struck eleven before I could tear myself away.

It was a sweet, quiet, starlight night: the streets were filled with passengers, but I was too much occupied in fancying approaching happiness, to heed the crowds that in great thoroughfares like those I passed were every moment flitting by. In Piccadilly a woman attracted my attention: a man, apparently a

servant, accompanied her: she looked me in the face, and, as I thought, with remarkable attention. Her companion walked quickly on, and I observed that the female's head was repeatedly turned back.

We came to the crossing of Vine-street, and there our progress was impeded by a sudden disturbance, occasioned by the detection of a pickpocket. Of course I kept at the outside of the crowd, to save my watch and note-case. I had always a fancy for looking at a row:—a dozen drunken watchmen were engaged, and ten of them were pulling off people, who, like myself, were merely spectators. The true delinquent took advantage of their mistake, shook off the only man that held him, and disappeared; and the unhappy sufferer was conducted to the watch-house, for the high crime of having his pocket picked.

I was exceedingly amused: while I watched the *dénouement* of the scene, my arm was gently pressed; I looked about, and a female figure, closely muffled in a cloak, thrust into my hand a crumpled paper, and, before I could ask a question, vanished in the crowd. Pshaw!—it

was some wretched *intrigante*—she had mistaken me for another.

The mob dispersed—the crossing was passable—and, unconscious that I held the billet in my hand, I reached my domicile in Berners-street. The waiter lighted my candles, and gave me some letters of no moment.

"A lady called on you, sir, this evening."

"Indeed—who was she?"

"She gave no name, sir; but was particularly anxious to see you."

"Was she here before?"

"Never, sir. Quite strange to the porter; and, as she called three times, we remarked her particularly."

"Describe her, William."

"Closely wrapped up in a dark silk cloak, and——"

"Was she tall?"

"She was, sir; and if one could judge by a partial glance, uncommonly handsome."

I thought of the muffled stranger in the street-row—she too was a fine-looking person. Her note was in my hand—I examined it—it bore no address, and was folded loosely. I des-

patched William for 'The Courier,' and then unclosed the billet I had so unceremoniously received.

The paper was coarse, and the folding betokened hurry or alarm; but the contents were more extraordinary, and limited to a word and a hieroglyph. I examined the letter carefully; nothing was discernible but "Beware!" followed by a rude drawing of a drinking-glass. What could the paper mean?—was it some idle joke to intimidate me? Who could the writer be? None of my friends would dare to trifle with me, or attempt anything so puerile.

William at this moment handed me a small parcel. I ordered brandy and water, and, when he disappeared, opened the packet:— it was a mahogany box, containing O'Donnel's far-famed marking-irons, as he termed them. No arrival could be more apposite— there lay a counter-charm against the danger which the lady's note intimated. I unlocked the case, and the pistols merited the eulogy the little colonel had bestowed upon them. They were splendid weapons certainly—perfectly efficient, and small enough for concealment. I loaded

them with studied accuracy; and if indeed any harm were intended, I determined to avail myself of the mysterious warning.

"This, after all," said I, as I mused over my glass of cognac—"this must be idle trickery. Can Sedley be concerned? very improbable: he will be more anxious to secure his own safety than endanger that of another. Shall I then despise the admonition of the dark-mantled gentlewoman? No, I will be prepared; and if my path is crossed, as Hamlet says, "I'll make a ghost of him that lets me."

I retired to my room, for the first time bolted the door, placed O'Donnel's tools upon the table, and with as much precaution as is used at dinner in a proclaimed barony, where the company are provided with pistols as well as plates, I went to sleep, dreaming of love and murder, bridals and banditti.

CHAPTER XIII.

HYMENEAL MOVEMENTS.—VISIT TO CAPTAIN HAWKINS, AND THE CONSEQUENCES.

Ferdinand.—Can you inform me for what purpose they are gone away?

Clara.—They are gone to be married, I believe.

The Duenna.

King.— Gertrude, do not drink.

Queen.—I will, my lord; I pray you pardon me.

King.—It is the poison'd cup.

Hamlet.

When I awoke next morning, and William had withdrawn the window-curtains, I was struck by the altered appearance my room presented to the eye. Yesterday, its simple toilet, and the solitary portmanteau it exhibited, gave it the air of the dormitory of some honest traveller; but now there was such a miscellaneous collection of trunks, pistols, and bonnet-boxes,

that I felt doubts of its identity, and half believed that I had mistaken another apartment for my own, and usurped the chamber of some married gentleman. Miss Sophia proved herself a good soldier, and had made ample preparations for a northern campaign, if one might judge from the extent of her baggage; and I should have safely doubled the wager I proposed, when I asserted that her maid for the last week had done little else but pack her lady's personals. Before my toilet was complete, Jack arrived to breakfast; and afterwards I accompanied him to Long-Acre, where he provided a light travelling-chariot for the intended expedition.

At twelve we drove to Clarges-street, and found Aylmer and the colonel already arrived, and my grandfather's solicitor in waiting. Two parchments of awful dimensions were lying on the table, and these, the lawyer informed us, were a deed of gift and a marriage-settlement. Soon after, Mr. Harrison joined us,—the parchments were read,—Emily summoned to attend, and, in due form, the high contracting powers—to use legal parlance—signed, sealed, and de-

livered. We separated immediately;—I, with Aylmer and the lawyer, to procure a licence at Doctors' Commons, and Jack and the short commander on some important vocation of their own.

As we drove into the city, I mentioned my last night's adventure to the cynic, and showed him the curious epistle I had received. He examined it with great attention.

"This is indeed a singular *billet-doux*, and were it directed to a drunkard, a person might comprehend its meaning; but addressed to you, the thing appears absurd: and yet the woman's perseverance in delivering it—that puzzles me. It is unaccountable!" And, turning to the lawyer, he inquired "was Sedley off?"

"I should say that he was, undoubtedly. Two forgeries of his are discovered already, and the officers have had a warrant given them for his apprehension. I am quite certain, that before this he has quitted the country, and sailed, most probably, for America."

"Yes—he will not risk arrest. From all I can learn of his character, he is more of a scheming

scoundrel than a bold villain. But here we are in Holborn—set down Mr. Hamlyn."

We stopped the coach, and the solicitor turned into Lincoln's-inn-fields.—"And now," said Aylmer, "let me have that scapegrace's address, and I'll proceed to find out the heiress of the Dalys, and ship her off according to your wishes." And we drove on to Berners-street.

In the drawing-room, as I expected, I found a note from Sophia. I broke the seal, favoured the cynic with the contents, and he made his own observations.

"'*My dear Coz*,'—"How quickly she acknowledges the relationship!"—'*My resolution fails, and I am convinced that I shall never have courage to venture—unless you persuade me.*'—"Ay, there is a saving clause in her demurrer."—'*I fear I shall want hardiesse when the hour comes to fulfil my rash engagement with that wild wretch, whom I am weak enough to love.*'—"Not at all,—a squadron of the Blues would not keep her from him."—'*Heigh-ho! what will my dear mother say when I am missed?*'—"Ah, that is very important; but she will take

chance of hearing mamma's remarks on her return to town."—'*Filial duty tells me I am doing wrong.*'—"Filial duty may as well keep quiet."—'*And could I violate the promise which in an unguarded moment I made?*'—"She would not do it."—'*But it is too late!*'—"Ay, I knew that would be the excuse for keeping it religiously."—'*You had better, my dear friend, be at the corner of Duchess-street at half-past seven precisely.*'—"Yes, take care of that, John; she will be there ten minutes before the time."—'*And if my courage fail not*——'—"She 'll be on this occasion brave as Boadicea!"—*I will entrust myself to your protection.*

'*Always and affectionately yours,*

'*S. H. M.*

'*Portland-place*, 1 o'clock.

'*P. S. Flavell, my maid, tells me that she left at your hotel two trunks, a dressing-case, two bonnet-boxes, and a carpet-bag.*'—"Well done, timidity! Not a bad kit for a sudden march."—'*Will you, like a dear good fellow, have them carefully put into Jack's carriage?*'—"Come, notwithstanding her agitation, she 's up to business. Be punctual,—she'll be with you before

Langham clock strikes the second chime. Now, in the mean time, what are you going to do?"

"I shall dine early in Clarges-street—meet Jack here; at seven, despatch the baggage,—and at half-past, levant with the director's daughter. Have I not sufficient occupation for the remainder of this day, Aylmer?"

"Why, pretty well. Then, good-b'ye! we will meet to-morrow," he said, and left me.

I had an hour to spare, and wrote to some of my old friends in the Rifles, and then walked over to Clarges-street. How changed was my situation—how different my feelings from those I experienced on the first morning I was in London, when I drove to the old man's house in Baker-street! Few as the days were that intervened, how fraught with interest and adventure! Not two weeks since, I entered town uncertain whether my relative would admit, or even acknowledge me, and full of all the doubtings of a lover. Since then, I had been received and rejected by my mistress,—tolerated and disinherited by my grandfather,—saved by a combination of lucky events, over which I had no control,—and now I was seek-

ing that stern old man, not timidly and suspected, but the affianced husband of his heiress, and the absolute master of six thousand pounds a-year! It is, as the song goes, "a whirligig world;" and though my ups and downs were many and fast upon each other, Dame Fortune had made honourable reparation, and placed me almost beyond the chances of human mutability.

Emily—my own tried Emily, welcomed me, and in a few minutes the old man joined us. It seemed that in his recollection all past *désagrémens* were forgotten. We were all happy—all pleased with each other.

When dinner was over, I told him of Jack the Devil's intended expedition. He laughed; and I verily believe he had pardoned, for my sake, half my cousin's delinquencies.

"And do you *really* think he will reform, John?" said the old gentleman.

"Indeed I do, sir. His father's difficulties—his own complete breakdown—the heartlessness of fashionable friends, the profligacy of an unprincipled woman—the ruin of gaming—all have

practically taught him that severe lesson, that otherwise would have fallen on an unheeding ear. Jack, sir, is single-hearted—honourable, after his own fashion, to an absurdity; and now that the heart is engaged—and I know it is—he will become a happier and a steadier man than you could anticipate. But I must leave you, sir."

"There is no danger in your assisting him, John?"

"None in the world, sir, unless we run away with the wrong lady, like Colonel O'Donnel."

I bade my grandfather good night, took leave of my beautiful bride, and promised to be with her to breakfast.

Jack was true to his appointment, and had directed his servant to bring his carriage to my hotel, to receive the personal effects of the fair fugitive, which, for safe keeping, she had committed to my charge. My cousin was in glorious spirits, and contemplated the abstraction of the director's daughter with the same excitement that a soldier meditates the surprise of an outpost, or a sailor the cutting out a prize.

"Come, John, let us have one bottle of claret. Ring, man; we shall have time enough."

The sound of carriage-wheels brought him to the window: it was his own travelling-chariot, with four spanking bays.

"Look here, John; some fun in this—none of your humdrum affair, with full consent of parents and guardians, marching up a church-aisle, followed by a well-dressed mob of stupid swains and simpering misses, the women libelling each other's looks, and the men whispering what a d—d fool you are. Here we go—off like a fox-hunt—trunks packed — servants in the rumble—lamps lighted—pistols loaded."

"Why, what the deuce—pistols! You are not going to shoot the girl?"

"No; I only intend to marry her. But, you know, some devil might come across one, —and there's no time in Scotch trips for stopping on the road."

"Speaking of pistols, I may as well put O'Donnel's nonpareils in my pocket; any exploit in your company is not the safest."

I stepped into my bed-room, where Jack's

valet was removing his lady's luggage, took the pistols from the table, and rejoined the bride-groom elect, who was talking to the waiter.

"Come, William—tumblers, if you please. We have no time for sipping light claret out of nutshells like these. Nine minutes past seven —send for a coach."

The waiter returned, brought large glasses and a letter, received his orders and departed; and while Jack the Devil filled high bumpers, I broke the seal, and read aloud the following curious invitation:—

"If the son of Colonel Blake will so far oblige an attached companion of his lamented father as to favour him with a few minutes' conversation at any time this evening that would be most convenient, he would make an old man happy. Broken health, and an infirmity of the limbs, must be the writer's apology for not calling on Captain Blake. As he leaves town to-morrow for Brighton, he expects the honour of a call this evening.

"P. S. Please to inquire for Captain Hawkins."

"Very strange this," I said.

"Where is the note addressed from?" said Jack.

"The White Lion, Borough."

"Oh! some country-inn, where hop-dealers and horse-jockeys put up. I know the place."

"What can the man want with me?"

"Money, to be sure: a regular begging letter."

"Then why not put his name to it, and one could have sent him something. I won't go. Who the devil can the man be?"

"Egad I know," exclaimed Jack. "I'll bet a pony it's old Captain Macgennis."

"He would have signed his name."

"Not he: poor as a Scotch peer, and proud as Lucifer. He used to tell me interminable stories about his 'dare Caasar,' as he called your father. I saw him about ten days ago in the Strand: he was looking ill, and, only I was in an awful hurry, I would have stopped and spoken to him."

"But wherefore this concealment?"

"For the same cause that ruins half Connaught—family pride. Pish! man, though the

old fool is starving on a subaltern's half-pay, he's as lofty in his own estimation as a field-marshal."

The quarter chimed — Jack's servant announced that all was ready, and my coach at the door.

"Come, John, fill a parting glass for luck. Here have we been six minutes finishing one poor flask. 'Odds whips and wheels,'—now for the road!"

We started in different directions;—Jack for the place of rendezvous, somewhere beyond Islington, and I for Portland-place, to pick up Miss Sophy and her waiting-maid.

I pulled up three or four houses from Duchess street;—left the coach, and proceeded down the flag-way to reconnoitre. The director's hall and drawing-room were brilliantly lighted, and, from appearances, I should have set the house down rather as the scene of a civic feast, than the place from which a young lady was levanting.

I walked up and down like a sentinel. Three-quarters chimed,—no fair fugitive appeared. Aylmer for once was wrong, and

filial duty had triumphed over youthful passion. "Eight" struck from Langham tower. I heard the coachman stamp upon the pavement to warm his feet, for the night was gloomy and cold. Five minutes more: I turned my eyes towards the appointed corner; but no female figure met their glance. Was there a blow-up —a discovery? There must be something wrong, and I exclaimed with Lydia Languish, "There will be no elopement after all!"

What a rage Jack the Devil would be in! Well, he could not blame me, for I was before my time at 'the trysting place.' I strolled quietly past the director's, turned again, when suddenly two figures issued from the area and walked quickly down before me. I came up within a few paces, but they were so closely muffled that recognition was impossible. They passed the coach,— that looked bad:—they came to a dead halt at the corner,—that looked better. "Sophia!" I whispered, as I rushed by them.

"Is it you, Blake?" said a soft voice in reply.

"Yes, my dear girl: I have been waiting

for you. Come, jump in!" And before three minutes we were on the New Road, and driving at honest Jarvy's best pace for the place appointed.

Poor Sophia was sadly affected. As we passed her father's house she burst into tears, and wept for a quarter of an hour. From the lady of the bedchamber I learned that the delay was occasioned by a dinner-party, and that neither mistress nor maid could effect an escape, until the entertainment occupied the guests, and engaged the servants in attendance on them.

"Now, Sophia, I thought I had got a stouter cousin than you prove. While you are crying here, Lord! what a fume Jack is in at the Stag! Heaven send he may not employ his idle time in flogging the postilions—or——"

"Probably he'll flog me;" and Sophia smiled faintly.

"That you will suffer for this delay, I have no doubt; but what the penalty will be, you can best tell. But we must surely be near the place?"

"Flavell knows this neighbourhood—she can tell us."

The *soubrette* announced that we were close to the White Stag; in another minute we stopped, and Jack appeared in waiting.

To transfer the lady to the carriage, and the maid to the rumble, was but a moment's work. Jack secured the attendant against cold by wrapping her in his boat-cloak, while I took care of *mademoiselle*. Sophia had thrown off her muffling; and a prettier or more piquant-looking runaway by lamplight never took the Northern road on a dark night.

"Farewell, Sophia!—write to me when you have time."

"And are you not to accompany us?" said the fair fugitive.

"Heaven pardon your duplicity! You would wish me in the Tower before we travelled the second stage. But as you are so fond of society in a carriage, could you not persuade Flavell to make number three?"

"No—poor girl! the inside of a coach always gives her a headache," she replied with infinite archness.

"Well, Jack has packed her in the rumble; so give me some two or three of the nineteen

kisses you owe me, and I shall bid you farewell."

All was ready,—I closed the door—slipped my note-case into my kinsman's hand, lest in the event of delay or any casualty supplies might fail,—the postilions got the word—whips cracked—the chariot started—and off went Jack the Devil and the director's daughter at a pace which told that the boys expected double payment, and the horses were nothing but "good ones."

I followed the fugitives with my eye, until a turn of the road shut them from my view; then embarked in my own sober vehicle, and proceeded back to town.

I looked at my watch—it wanted a quarter to ten—and where should I kill an hour? It was too late to go to Clarges-street—Aylmer probably would be out, and O'Donnel never returned before midnight to his lodgings. I thought of Captain Hawkins' note—what if I drove to his inn and visited the comrade of my father? I should never have an hour more perfectly disengaged than the present; and when I reached the Peacock, I desired the coachman

to drive into the city and set me down on London-bridge.

When I discharged the vehicle, I walked briskly into Blackman-street, and easily made out the house where my father's friend had taken up his temporary residence. It was one of those ancient caravanseras common in that part of Southwark, having an open area within a gateway, surrounded by sleeping-rooms, and approached by wooden galleries and stairs. There was a tap or drinking-room inside the archway, and I inquired from the barmaid if "Captain Hawkins was at home?" After some delay I was shown into a large sitting-room, and found therein a grey-haired and venerable-looking personage, who proved to be my correspondent, and a tall slight young man, who, he informed me, was his nephew.

I opened the conversation by acknowledging the receipt of his note, and asking what his commands were, or in what way I could be serviceable?

The old man thanked me politely, and added, that to obtain pecuniary assistance was not his object in soliciting an interview; but, on the

contrary, he wished to repay a debt due to his old friend my father. His story was a simple one. Many years before, he had been ordered on foreign service—and when about to embark was arrested for a paltry sum of fifteen pounds. My father had accidentally heard of the distress of a brother soldier, and discharged the debt. Captain Hawkins had been twenty years in India—made some money—returned recently—inquired after the heir of his former benefactor, and now requested leave to restore the sum that my father had so long since and so opportunely obliged him with. As he spoke, he handed me a banker's check for the amount, which I peremptorily declined accepting. Nothing could exceed the old man's gratitude—he was affected to tears, for he applied his handkerchief—while I pleaded the lateness of the hour and the distance to my hotel, and rose to take my leave.

The old soldier seemed very unwilling to part with me; and observed, that as I had so far to go, I should probably require a carriage. I told him I should certainly, and that I intended directing my course to the first coach-stand. This,

he replied, was unnecessary—there were conveyances immediately beside us, and he would send for one. Accordingly, he rang the bell, and the person that answered it was despatched to procure the vehicle.

I laid down my hat again; the veteran said he had a favour to ask, surely I would grant it? While the carriage was being brought, would I share a bottle of wine with him? I declined it. "Well, even one glass of negus — something merely to drink to the memory of his lamented friend my father?" I saw that a refusal pained him—consented; and, as the waiter had been sent out, he despatched his nephew to the bar to bring glasses for himself and me.

The young man returned speedily, placed the wine and water before us, and then took up a newspaper and retired to another table.

The veteran touched my glass with his. "This to the memory," he said with considerable emotion, "of my beloved friend and lamented benefactor!" and he drank to the bottom of the glass. I finished but half the contents of mine, and returned the tumbler to the table—for in truth the wine was infamous.

"Ah! Captain Blake," said the old man, "you do not like that negus: you and I have been too long accustomed to wines of a better quality, to relish what one meets in obscure inns like this. But we soldiers know how to take the rough with the smooth."

I inquired if the coach had come; for I found a nausea in my stomach, and wished to quit the room. The young man laid down his paper and went out to ask. Surely I was not tipsy? and yet my eyes felt misty, and I heard the veteran's remarks confusedly. Momentarily I felt more strangely affected — an unconquerable drowsiness overpowered me. I leaned my head back — visions and phantasies tormented me. The old man's figure faded from my sight — external objects disappeared altogether — I became utterly unconscious — and next minute dropped upon the bench insensible.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HOUSE OF MURDER.

I woke.—Where was I? Do I see
A human face look down on me?
Is this a chamber where I lie?
And is it mortal, yon bright eye
That watches me with gentle glance?
I closed my own again once more,
As doubtful that the former trance
Could not as yet be o'er.

Mazeppa.

After falling on the table, I have no recollection of anything that occurred for many hours. I learned, upon subsequent inquiry, that my insensibility was attributed to drunkenness, and that the old man and his companion had removed me (as they said) to my own lodgings in a coach. In a low hostel like the Lion, where beastly inebriety was a common event,

cases like mine would occasion neither sympathy nor surprise; and the inmates of the house were no doubt too happy in getting rid of a troublesome and unprofitable customer.

I must have remained in death-like torpidity for a considerable space of time, as the first dawn of morning was gleaming through the window when I first unclosed my eyes. Strange and fearful images of the past floated indistinctly across my memory. Prisons, manacles, instruments of death—wild, vague, and nameless horrors distracted me. I strove to turn—my limbs felt cramped and confined; mechanically I stretched my hand out—and, by Heaven! an iron fetter met my touch. Where was I? The light was yet too feeble to penetrate the chamber; drowsiness oppressed me still; I slumbered—awoke again—my lips were parched—my brain was burning. Was I on earth still—or in some place of misery and punishment? The infernal sensations I underwent will never pass from my recollection.

Suddenly a strong light fell upon my eyes: I looked up—two men were standing at my bedside; but I was still too much confused to

scrutinize their persons, or heed the few words that fell from them. Presently they disappeared—the light vanished, and I slept—if such agonizing stupor could be called sleep.

It was clear day before I looked round again. The chamber was small, square, and lighted by a solitary window, placed at such a distance from the ground, that, if standing under, I could not have reached it with my extended arm. It contained not an article of furniture but one old table: yet it was a singular room—the walls were hung round with mattresses, the floor covered with thick matting, and neither door nor outlet of any kind was visible.

Was I then dreaming? I raised my hand to rub my forehead—it was checked suddenly by a manacle! I threw aside the bed-covering—fetters secured my ankles! Had Reason left her seat—or was this reality? I must be mad. I turned my head away, buried it deep in the counterpane, and tried to persuade myself that all was a dream.

While in a state of mental agony that no mortal suffering could equal, I felt my shoulder touched: I turned sharply, and a woman was

bending over me. I would have spoken, but her finger was pressed upon her lip, and the expression of her countenance was so fearfully intelligent, that I understood it, and remained mute.

"Rouse your energies!" she whispered in my ear; "there will be persons here immediately. Be dumb—pretend to sleep—and leave the rest to me."

Almost before the words were uttered, she disappeared, leaving her visit questionable whether it were not unreal and delusory. But suspense was quickly ended: I heard a noise—peeped through my half-closed eyelids—and two men, muffled and masked, were standing beside my rude couch. Though still mentally confused, the female's warning was not forgotten—I breathed heavily, and affected stupor.

"Why, what a dose you gave him!" said the shorter ruffian of 'the twain.' "Rouse him up! the thing must be done, for another day may ruin us." The voice was Sedley's.

"It is useless," replied the tall one; "Hensley overdid the business. I told him distinctly to put but twenty drops into the tumbler: he

added forty to the wine. Had he drunk off the whole, no earthly power could have saved him. He must not be disturbed—it would answer no purpose, and only delay matters."

"But, zounds!" rejoined Sedley with impatience, "while he sleeps the officers may find some clue to our retreat, and I shall be apprehended."

"And pray," said the poisoner, "am I on a bed of roses? What is the difference between us? If detected, you stand a fair chance of the rope, and I a dead certainty of transportation."

"Well—what is to be done?" inquired Sedley, impatiently. "It was a bungling affair from first to last."

"I beg to differ with you," rejoined the tall mask: "I never managed a more hazardous one, and a few hours will remedy the only mistake committed."

"In the devil's name, then, be it so! What are we to do?"

"Leave him quiet till evening—give him some liquids to neutralize the morphine, and

make all ready for an immediate start after we bleed his banker in the morning."

"Will he require to be looked after?"

"Do you mean for safe keeping? The dose he swallowed last night will save all trouble on that score; and as to recovering him from the narcotic, Marianne shall manage that."

"He is quite safe, then? After your account is cleared, remember, he is left to me."

"Let him but write my check, and to your tender mercies I commit him. Safe!"—and the taller ruffian turned over the counterpane, and examined the manacle and fetters; "if in morphine and cold iron there is security, this honest gentleman is safe."

"I think so."

"Of that be certain, my friend. And now let us pack everything, and at dusk we'll drive to Netty's, and deposit them. Come, I will send Marianne to attend our patient."

The ruffians laughed sarcastically—raised a mattress from the wall—passed through the aperture, and left me.

They were mistaken. I had not swallowed so much of the infernal mixture as they believed; its deleterious effects were passing rapidly away—fear and imminent danger had roused my dormant energies, and the colloquy I had overheard dispelled any remnant of the lethargy their murderous draught had produced.

Escape was now my first consideration, and I examined the room attentively. The window was the only outlet to attempt it by. It was strongly grated—the sash turning on a pivot, and opening and closing by a cord, of which but a fragment remained. I tried to free myself from the manacle, but the scoundrels had secured me beyond the chance of any power of my own being able to effect my liberation; and I turned in despair from idle and impotent attempts, to think how versatile was Fortune's smile—how rapid the wreck of mortal happiness.

What was I yesterday? My God! I felt as if my heart would burst when I contrasted the present with the past, and pondered on the ruin a few brief hours had effected. Ay! yesterday

I had been gifted with a noble inheritance, and to-morrow should have made the loveliest girl that ever plighted faith to man "mine own." What was I now?—I shuddered as I asked the question;—a powerless wretch—a fettered captive, occupying a murderer's den, and doomed to fall by an assassin! Was there a chance of escape left?—had I a struggle for life, no matter how desperate the odds might be against success? No, no: before another sunset, I should close my career by secret means, or perish by open violence!

Miserable as such thoughts were, another that crossed my mind was more distressing still. How tamely had I become the victim of these ruffians—how stupidly had I fallen into their murderous hands! I—forewarned by the strange epistle—in the centre of a populous city—with weapons on my person!—here I was, abject as a woman, with a throat ready for the slayer's knife whenever the hour came! Oh, God! had I but fallen as men fall, my foot free, my hand at liberty to strike in my mortal struggle!—but trepanned, immured, slaughtered—my death unknown, my murder unrevenged!

These thoughts were maddening — my heart swelled, my brain burned: — once more an arm touched mine. I looked fiercely up — no truculent face glared hatefully upon me; but eyes beaming with gentleness and compassion were turned in pity upon mine.

There was hope — there was heaven in that compassionate look! I would have spoken, but a warning glance restrained me. She placed a bowl of tea upon the table, desired me aloud to drink — then stooping until her lips almost touched my ear, and whispering, "Courage, I shall be with you soon," departed as the ruffians had done, and I heard her lock and bar the hidden door.

I drank the tea — to me, so fevered, the beverage was most welcome. My heart beat faster — the blood flowed freely through my veins. I strove to calm my spirits down, and nerve myself to seize the first chance that fortune offered, no matter how desperate the odds were against succeeding.

I was not long alone, — the bar fell — the key grated in the lock — and a man, the taller one, came in. He stood over my bed, and examined

my countenance attentively; but as he wore a mask, his face was entirely concealed. He laid the requisites for writing on the table, and then turning down the bed coverings, unlocked the manacle, and left my hands at liberty.

"Are you awake?" he said, in a deep disguised voice.

I affected drowsiness as I replied, "Why, hardly—I am sleepy—my head is confused. Where am I?"

"That you will discover time enough. There," and he pointed to the table, "read that paper when you can, and obey its mandate if you would leave this place with life. I shall come here four hours hence," and the scoundrel pulled out my own gold repeater, and marked the time with his finger on the dial;—"see that what is ordered here"—and he touched a written paper—"be done!" He raised the mattress, left me, and carefully secured the outlet.

How wearily time passes to the captive! The promised visitor did not return—an hour must have elapsed. Where was she? would she not come again? It was long past noon,

for the sunbeams glanced obliquely through the grated casement. Another want was felt—hunger had succeeded sickness. I heard a noise without,—the bolts were undone—the door unclosed—the unknown female entered with a tray, on which a plentiful repast was spread. She placed it on the table, and I required small persuasion to attack the viands stoutly.

"I must leave you for a few minutes," she said, "and ascertain how certain persons are employed below-stairs. In that flask you will find brandy, in this water;—refresh your strength, renew your spirits—ere long both will be tried!"

She said, and left the apartment.

Who was this singular woman? At times I fancied I had heard the voice before; but, from the close bonnet she wore, I could discover nothing but that her eyes were dark and brilliant, and the general character of her face exceedingly handsome. Her absence was short—and when she returned, it was evident that I had attended to her advice, as fragments

of food and a full glass of brandy and water testified.

"All is safe," she said; then turning suddenly round, she asked if I remembered her?

"Ah! no—hitherto the stupifying effects of that villanous mixture have confused me, and you are besides so closely muffled."

She laid aside her bonnet. Heavens! it was my old travelling acquaintance—the lady of the *soi-disant* colonel!

"Why did you not attend to my warning?—I made several attempts to see and caution you—they failed; and as a last hope I addressed a hurried note to you. Did you receive it?"

"Yes," I replied.

"It was mysterious, certainly; but plain enough to put a prudent man upon his guard."

"Alas! I did not comprehend its import. Am I lost, lady? Is there a hope—a chance, or is all desperate?"

"The brave," she said, "only abandon hope with life. A chance of escape remains, if you are reckless of danger, and will spill blood freely if nothing else will do."

"O that I had liberty and weapons, and neither heart nor hand should fail!"

"Both shall be yours."

As she spoke, she produced a bunch of keys, applied a small one to the fetter-lock, and in a minute my limbs were free."

"Thanks, my kind preserver! Can you procure me weapons?"

"Here are your own;" and she unrolled a handkerchief and handed me a case of pistols. "These remained unnoticed in the pocket of your coat when the villains stripped you partially last night. I found and concealed them, until I could restore and you could use them."

My blood warmed—my heart felt lighter, when I grasped them. I examined the pistols hastily: the balls were safe—the flints and primings excellent.

"Now listen to me attentively."

"I will;—but first say, wherefore am I brought here?"

"To satisfy the cupidity of one scoundrel, and satiate the vengeance of another."

"Indeed I am not worth plundering. I

parted with every note in my possession before I fell into those ruffians' hands.

"Look on that table—there is a paper that you are required to 'execute.'"

I took it up; it was a check upon Drummonds' for two thousand pounds. The villain must have known, when he ordered me to draw for so large a sum, that, on my return to England, I had removed the fortune of my mother from the funds and lodged it with my bankers.

"And if I did this act, would it ensure my liberty?" was my remark.

"Would being plundered by one villain appease the deadly hatred of another, or Martelli's robbery satisfy Sedley's revenge? Remember all he owes you: you detected and exposed him;—and to you he attributes loss of character and caste—mistress—fortune—everything that was worth living for. No, no—your death in this den was determined on; nothing but your blood could glut his vengeance. Listen to me. There are now four ruffians in the house; they are engaged in packing up some valuable effects, with which they intend sailing from the river

to-morrow morning. At nightfall two of them will convey these packages to the dwelling of a female accomplice called Annette: of her I know nothing, only that she is wife or mistress to your enemy. When they are gone, our attempt must be made—we shall have but *two* to deal with. Overpower them, if possible, without loss of life—for, oh! there is too much blood upon my soul already;—but if surprise fails, either we or they must perish!"

"Enough! — I comprehend you perfectly. What am I to do in the mean time?"

"Write the check as you are directed—it will keep Martelli quiet uutil his companions leave the house."

"Will that be soon?"

"In two or three hours. Dinner is preparing;—that over, they will depart with the packages; and when the others are engaged drinking, you shall be set free. The rest depends on a bold heart and ready arm!"

"But what place is this?"

"A fitting den for murder! Mark you a broken cord fastened to the bottom of the lattice?"

"I do."

"Observe those marks upon the wall."

I looked at the place she pointed to — the plaster was scraped and broken.

"That rope terminated the earthly sufferings of the insane wretch who before you occupied this chamber, and the surface of the wall was indented during the convulsions of his last agonies."

I shuddered—a thrill of horror shot through me like an electric shock.

"I must leave you, or suspicion might arise. Be bold and ready—nothing else can save you and me! Martelli will visit you before dinner; and the next time you hear the key turn in the lock, you are free—if your own heart be stout, and fortune favour us. If either fail, in another hour both of us will be in eternity!"

"Fear me not—bring me some weapon to strike with."

"I will. And now to bed, lest any accident should lead the ruffians hither."

She left biscuits, with brandy and water—removed the remnant of my dinner—departed, and locked me in my prison.

When she was gone, I wrote the check—concealed the pistols beneath my pillow—replenished my tumbler—crept beneath the bedcoverings—and with all the calmness I could muster, waited for the moment of action, when the deepest cast of my game of life should be decided, and the result be freedom or death.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CATASTROPHE.

To the massy door
A light step came—it paused—it moved once more;
Slow turns the grating bolt and sullen key:
'Tis as his heart foreboded—that fair she!
Whate'er her sins, to him a guardian saint,
And beauteous still as hermit's hope can paint;
Yet changed since last within the cell she came,
More pale her cheek, more tremulous her frame.

The Corsair.

First Murderer.—What, shall we stab him as he sleeps?
Second Murderer.—No—he'll say 'twas done cowardly.

King Richard III.

Evening came—the light shone dimly through the grating of my prison, and neither friend nor foe had broken for hours upon my solitude. Presently I heard a noise in the antichamber, —the bolt revolved—and Martelli, masked as usual, stood beside my bed. He looked at me,

then turned to the table, took up the check, and examined it attentively.

"Is this the usual way in which you draw upon your banker?"

"It is."

"And this the precise form in which you write your name?"

I answered in the affirmative.

"Will this draft be duly honoured?"

"That question I cannot answer. I know that there are funds of mine at Drummonds' greater than the amount of the check."

The ruffian looked heedfully at the paper and then at me.

"I ask you, Captain Blake, if this draft be regularly filled up, and in the customary mode by which you withdraw money?"

"It is."

"And in form and signature there is nothing to beget suspicion?"

"I have already answered you."

The ruffian put the check into his pocket-book, and removed his mask, which he laid upon the table.

"Captain Blake," he said coolly, "there is

no occasion that you and I should continue strangers to each other longer. You are welcome to examine my face. Before twenty hours I shall be on the sea, and you"—— he made a momentary pause,—"no matter where. Now attend to me, and let us understand each other clearly. At ten to-morrow this check will be presented: if paid, well,—if not—" he stopped, and drew a short stiletto from his bosom,—"this dagger will be dyed in your heart's blood!"

"And would you murder an unoffending man—a helpless and unarmed captive?"

"Ay, boy. This little weapon has searched many a breast before now: it has been often tried, and never failed its master."

My hand grasped the handle of a pistol, when I saw the glitter of the murderer's knife. I wished to shoot him dead; but prudence required me to be patient, and "bide my time," until a safer hour of vengeance came.

"Have you had food?" said the ruffian: "I perceive Marianne has left you some brandy to keep up your spirits."

"A fettered captive like me has but a sorry appetite."

"More fool you!" said the villain. "I have had ere now more iron on my carcase than you could stand under, and that was the time when I would have been most thankful for a decent dinner and a well-filled brandy-bottle. Drink, man, while your throat is whole; before to-morrow night there might be a slit in it.—Talking of eating makes me hungry, and I'll to dinner. Adieu!—I wish you pleasant dreams till we meet; I shall be then two thousand richer, or you——" He paused—drew his hand across his neck—passed through the concealed door, and drew bolt and bar.

Cold and sanguinary monster! the *sang-froid* with which he pronounced my doom—the look with which he parted from me, steeled my heart—blood should flow; and, before long, Martelli and his confederate feel that their victim was not so powerless as they believed him.

While I was cooped in this den of murder, Jack's elopement, and my extraordinary disappearance, had occasioned considerable surprise.

But when noon came and I had not yet returned, my continued absence began to occasion serious apprehensions for my safety. The waiter fortunately recollected the number of the coach in which, on the preceding night, I had taken my departure from the hotel, and, on inquiry, the driver was found, and informed Aylmer and O'Donnel, that he had brought me back to town, and set me down upon the bridge. This information increased, rather than allayed, their fears; and they decided on proceeding to Clarges-street, and acquainting my grandfather. The old man was dreadfully alarmed; but from Emily everything was concealed, and my absence attributed to having accompanied my kinsman until he was beyond the reach of pursuers, if there had been any such.

The recollection of the mysterious intimation of danger that the strange billet had contained, increased the cynic's apprehensions. He returned to Berners-street again; but there were no tidings of the lost one—no clue by which to trace me after I had been left on the bridge. Aylmer, in despair, was quitting my apart-

ments, when, in carelessly turning over some notes and papers, the fictitious letter which brought me to the Lion, and delivered me into the hands of my implacable enemy, was found. It was now past four o'clock, and the cynic, accompanied by the little commander, drove directly to the Borough, and there he learned all that the good people themselves knew. I had been there—met strangers—persons altogether unknown to the landlord and his servants—and in an incredibly short time had become so much inebriated, as to be carried to a coach; but whither conveyed afterwards none could say. The mystic note—my sudden insensibility—all strengthened the cynic's fears, and he returned to Clarges-street, confirmed in his darkest suspicions, and persuaded that he should never see me a living man. Night was coming fast, and, after many and tedious efforts to discover the coach in which I had been abstracted from the Lion, my friends rejoined Mr. Harrison, sadder and not wiser men.

In my prison more than an hour had passed, and I paced its narrow confines impatiently. As night came, suspense grew agonizing, and I

prayed anxiously for the moment when I should yield life up or achieve my liberty. The horrors of my situation became intolerable: at every sound my heart leaped—every minute I was more nervous and uncollected. The darkness added to the gloominess of my fancies, —I saw the wretched suicide suspended from the lattice, and struggling against the wall in parting agony. Was that the rustling of his feet? No, no—it was the turning of a key,— and Marianne stood beside me.

She carried a dark lantern, which she unclosed and laid upon the table, and then produced a short iron bar, evidently formed for a weapon of offence. It was, indeed, a murderous implement: I clutched it firmly in my right hand—and with a pistol in my left, and another disposed in my bosom, to permit me to draw it in a second, I told my deliverer that "I was ready."

"Stop,—we must not rush unadvisedly upon danger. I shall acquaint you with the *locale* of the room where our enemies are sitting. It opens from the hall below, and communicates with a deserted chamber by folding-doors, one

of which has dropped from the upper hinge, and thus you will be enabled to see what passes in the other chamber. Martelli is a formidable enemy—him you shall attack, and I will prevent Sedley from assisting. Remember, they are well armed. Watch me!—when, as if by accident, I snuff one taper out, the moment that I re-light it, spring on Martelli. Down with him!—if your blow fail, use your pistol promptly, or he will stab you!"

"Are the others gone?"

"Yes, some time before I ventured hither."

"How pale you look!" I said.

"Ay, and you tremble," returned Marianne.

"Mine is no coward fear: I long but for the moment of action. But, come, we both require a stimulus."

I half filled a wine-glass with brandy. How deadly pale that face, once, no doubt, beautiful, seemed by the sickly flare of the dark-lantern!

She took the glass from my hand.

"I drink it," she said. "Up heart! fail me not at this moment. Drink, sir; it will serve you now."

I am not ashamed to own that my nerves

required confirmation. Not that I admit I felt one spark of cowardice, for I had that knowledge of the certain death awaiting me, that would have driven the veriest dastard mad: but to descend the stairs calmly, and in a minute or two decide the toss-up, on which the ruffians' lives and mine depended, required colder philosophy than any which I could summon.

"Are you ready?"

"Perfectly," I replied, with affected indifference.

"Follow me in silence, and when I lay my hand across your breast, stop — there is your position."

"I understand you."

"You know the signal?"

"Yes—and it shall be promptly answered."

"Then, come, and may God and the blessed Lady assist us!"

She took the lantern from the table, and led the way into a large desolate anti-room. It was without furniture of any kind; and damp stains on the walls, and cobwebs clinging to the cornices, showed that for a long time it had

been untenanted. My coat and boots were lying on the floor, where the ruffians had thrown them carelessly when they stripped them off to apply the manacles. Little did they suppose, when they removed them, that they were but preparing me the better for action and surprise. We passed into a dark lobby, and descended a back staircase. My guide closed the lantern, took my hand, led me along a winding corridor into a spacious room. A half-closed folding-door admitted a stream of light, and from the inner chamber the voices of Sedley and his confederate were heard in earnest conversation. We reached the centre of the room, when the pistol I had deposited in my breast unfortunately fell upon the floor. The noise echoed through the unfurnished apartment, and we heard the ruffians leaping from their chairs.

"Who is there?" exclaimed both voices.

"I!" said the female, as she laid her hand across my breast, and rushed through the folding-doors.

"What the devil noise was that?" inquired Martelli.

"I dropped the lantern," replied the female.

"But what brought you through that room?"

"I came down the back stairs to look from the lobby window, as I heard the dog bark.

"Well—saw you anything without?"

"Nothing.—Lord! I'm so frightened at every noise! I would not live another week in this infernal place to be made queen of Britain. If ever house was haunted, this one is!"

"And there will be an additional ghost added to the party before to-morrow night," said the foreigner. "Come, pass the jug; that port is indifferent good wine, wherever Hensley made it out."

I had advanced a few steps during the conversation, and from my concealment could see distinctly everything that passed within. The room and the company would have afforded a fit study for the gloomiest pencil that was ever laid on canvass. The chamber was meanly and scantily furnished; the light of a brilliant wood fire and a pair of candles fell upon the harsh features of Sedley, while the countenance of his companion was partially in shade,—more truculent faces were never sketched by a painter. Drinking-glasses and a large jug were on

the table, and in a corner of the room, and laid upon an old chest, a quantity of fire-arms and other weapons were deposited, and ready for instant use.

"Were you in the prisoner's room?" said Sedley to the female, who was engaged in placing fresh billets on the fire.

"Not I!" she answered testily; "I hate to go near it. I never look at the place where the madman hanged himself, but I fancy I see his face peeping through the grated window, black and convulsed as when the keeper cut him down."

"Pish!" said Martelli; "I have seen in my time many a strangled corpse."

"Ay, and helped to do the job too!" said Marianne, with some bitterness.

"Why, how peevish you have grown of late! Well, if you must have the truth, I may have lent a hand before now."

"Is it difficult to choke a fellow?" inquired Sedley.

"Not if a man knows how to go about it. A thin line—such as makes a bell-pull or cords

a trunk—that 's the best gear. Do you intend to try your hand upon the chap up-stairs ?"

" Is it not enough to half poison and whole rob him, but he must be slaughtered too ?"

" Die he shall !" replied Sedley. " I would not quit England, even were my neck to stretch for it, until I feasted my eyes in gazing on his breathless body."

" You hate him cordially, no doubt ?" said the female.

" I hate him more than all mankind put together."

" What is it for ?—supplanting you with the girl or the grandfather ?" said Martelli with a sneer.

" And could he expect that any woman would tolerate that scarecrow countenance ?" —and Marianne looked scornfully at the short scoundrel, who returned her sarcasm with a menacing glance,—" or listen to his addresses for a moment, when that handsome lad up-stairs was to be won ?"

" Before many hours," replied Sedley, " I 'll mar his wooing and spoil his beauty. Ay,"—

and he pulled a paper from his pocket,—" and when he is stiff, I 'll stick this upon his body, and with the same knife that stabbed him !"

" What paper is that ?" Martelli inquired.

" His marriage licence. Ha ! will not that be good revenge ? I found it in the fool's pocket, when we were taking off his coat."

" And will you be executioner ?" said the stouter ruffian.

" No," said the female with a sneer, " he will only pin the paper on the corpse, and leave the stabbing part to you, or Hensley, or anybody who may happen to possess a man's heart and a man's arm."

" Now, by Heaven !" exclaimed the shorter villain, " I 'll murder him before ten minutes."

" No, no, you won't. Remember, the handcuffs are off, and though his feet are fettered to the bed-post, he might knock you over with the bolster."

" Who dared to take the irons off ?" said the ruffian angrily.

" I did," returned Martelli coolly.

" And wherefore ?" Sedley asked.

" How the devil could he have written a

banker's check with his wrists manacled? Wait till he is asleep,"—and a sneer played over his features.

"Not I!" replied Sedley, with ferocity: "all I ask you to do, is to hold the light."

"And when your puny efforts fail, to use the stiletto afterwards," and Marianne laughed.

"Come, we'll prove that soon. Give us candles."

"Stop, let me snuff them first," and Marianne put forward her hand, but Martelli stayed her.

"Look you, Sedley; with your victim upstairs, I have nothing more to do, provided the check he gave me be not dishonoured in the morning. I have no particular fancy for cutting throats—you may do the job if you please, and I 'll stick to the jug."

"But can't you hold the light?"

"Why, no, except on one condition—and if that be conceded, I will not only be candle-bearer, but, if you prove a bungler, as I think it likely you may, I will possibly give you some good advice and a little assistance."

"Name your condition."

"I have got here a tolerable watch," and the scoundrel drew mine from his pocket; "but my finger looks bare without a ring; and that is a pretty diamond that sparkles upon yours."

"I understand you," replied Sedley; "the ring is yours."

Martelli extended his hand, while Sedley drew the jewel from his finger and presented it to his villanous confederate.

"Come, let us finish this jug first, and the job afterwards."

"Agreed—but be speedy."

"And I will snuff the candles," said the female. She did so, and that before Martelli was extinguished.

The time was come—I drew in my breath until my bosom swelled—clutched the iron bar—wound myself up for action—and waited for the signal to spring on.

This was indeed the trying hour of a life—yet I was calm, ready, and collected. I watched Marianne move round the table to the place where the smaller ruffian sat. Martelli had

raised the jug, while she stooped over Sedley's shoulder for an instant, and applied the candle steadily to the blaze—lighted, and laid it on the table. I bounded through the folding-doors —Martelli had scarcely time to look round, on hearing the noise behind him, before I smote him with my full force upon the head—and he rolled off the chair motionless, and to all appearance a dead man!

At the moment when I leaped from my hiding-place, Marianne cast her arms round Sedley's body, and though he made violent efforts to shake her off and reach a dirk, that we found in his bosom afterwards, she clung to him with amazing strength and resolution. They struggled across the room, as he dragged her to the chest on which the fire-arms were deposited. I rushed to her assistance as Sedley was catching at a pistol; but, from the closeness of Marianne's embrace, I could not deal a mortal blow without endangering my preserver. The villain's arm was extended to its full length, grasping at the weapon—I struck it with shattering force—a shriek of agony burst from the mur-

derer, as the fractured arm dropped powerless to his side. Marianne's hold relaxed, and Sedley endeavoured to gain the door; but ere he attained it, a stunning blow marred escape, and stretched him on the floor beside his dead companion!

CHAPTER XVI.

ESCAPE.—SEIZURE OF A COACH.—RETURN TO TOWN.

> What mortal his own doom may guess?
> Let none despond, let none despair!
>
> *Mazeppa.*

It was indeed a fearful and a sickening sight, which the parlour of the ruffians' abode exhibited. Martelli and his confederate weltered on the floor, whose bare boards were moist with blood—while Marianne's dark hair, which had been dishevelled in the struggle, streamed loosely down her shoulders, as with a look, pallid and horror-stricken beyond description, she leaned against the mantel for support. I, with the implement of death in my grasp—my shirt-sleeves crimsoned from wrist to shoulder, stood over the fallen murderers. The desolate

apartment—the flickering lights—the drinking-glasses—the arms—all gave to the scene a wild and robber-like appearance; and so sudden was the attack, so rapid the catastrophe, that I felt as if the thing was still incomplete, and looked fiercely round to seek some other enemy on whom to prove my strength, and employ the murderous weapon I carried. But a moment recalled my wandering thoughts. I saw that Marianne was fainting—laid the weapons on the table, and hastened to her relief.

"Courage, my fair preserver—the fight is over, the business done."

"Not half," she feebly answered.

"Here, Marianne," and I held the wine-jug to her lips—"Drink, and muster courage—if you sink, we both perish."

"I am better," she said; "mine is but a momentary weakness: and surely in such a place, and with such a scene to meet the eye, it is excusable in a woman to quail?"

Where I had placed my arm around her for support, my shirt-sleeve had left a crimson stain, and I remarked it.

"That can be removed," she replied with a

shudder. "Alas! there are blood-spots on my soul that Heaven's mercy alone can cleanse! But this is no time to listen to a woman's lament, or a sinner's confession. Up, sir, and be doing! Escape is now our first care—give me a light, and look sharply to those upon the floor; they are artful villains, and death may be only simulated—the snake 'scotched not killed.'—I 'll join you presently;" and seizing a taper she hurried from the chamber.

I stood over the prostrate robbers—these were the men who but five minutes since were rising from the table to despatch me—there they lay, soaking in their own blood, their victim the avenger! How long seemed Marianne's absence! —she came at last—brought my coat and boots, a small bundle of feminine apparel, and the manacles which I had so lately worn. I comprehended her intention — took the fetters, linked the ruffians to each other, and flung the key away.

"Ay," she muttered, "this makes all sure. Hasten, Captain Blake—take any weapon from yonder chest you fancy, and here is the one whose fall so nearly caused a premature disco-

very: had it happened, we should have paid dearly for the accident. You see there was no lack of weapons there; and that powerless hand"—as she pointed to Martelli—"could use them well."

I selected a brace of pistols—belted them with a handkerchief to my waist—secured the iron mace that had done such good service, and desired Marianne to lead on.

"Not yet. Should the absent ruffians return before we are safe from pursuit, we must not leave them weapons wherewith to follow after us, and avenge their dead companions."

She collected the arms in her cloak, and left me once more,—her absence was short.

"I have bestowed them safely," she said.

"Where?" I inquired.

"Where they will profit the finder little if he require them for present use—I threw them in the water-butt. Come on, sir; I have examined the mastiff's chain—he is secure."

"Now, Heaven direct us!" I ejaculated.

"Amen!" she responded solemnly. "We have to make out the road, for I am almost a stranger to it. Except one visit to the City in

search of you, I have never been outside these walls since the night I was brought hither by him who lies at your feet."

"Was Martelli your husband, Marianne?"

"Hush! for God's sake; ask me nothing of him—nothing of myself, at present. Come on,—I trust we shall evade a meeting with the other villains."

"No matter, I am bravely armed."

"And think you that they are not equally prepared? Light the lantern, and follow me in silence."

"Marianne," I said, as a sudden recollection crossed my mind, "yonder scoundrel has stolen my watch."

"What matter! leave the bauble,—minutes are worth all the watches upon earth to you and me."

"I would care nothing for its loss, Marianne, were it not a dear memorial of my father."

"Your father!" she half-screamed, and rushing back she pulled it from the murderer's pocket and presented it to me. The ring that was to repay his assisting in my death still glittered on Martelli's finger.

"Shall I remove this for you, Marianne?"

"No," she said indignantly; "let that ill-won jewel perish on the hand whose foul services it purchased! Hurry!—we should be distant from this place ere now."

We left the chamber of blood, and passed through the deserted hall. The door was secured; it cost us some time to remove the numerous fastenings; and, cautiously as we left the house, the under-growl of the mastiff showed that our movements had not escaped his vigilance; but, owing to Marianne's foresight, the dog was unable to oppose our flight.

We closed the door—crossed a neglected garden, and followed a path that ran parallel with a high brick wall. The walk had once been gravelled, but it was in some places obstructed with rubbish, and overgrown with weeds and rank grass. It was skirted by full-grown evergreens, and at its termination we found a small wicket. I tried the door—it was locked,—I examined the wall—it was too high for me to touch, and was topped with broken bottles. I might have scaled the fence, but to Marianne it was insurmountable, and nothing

remained but to continue our researches, and find some breach or outlet by which we might escape.

While we held a brief consultation in cautious whispers, voices conversing in a low tone were heard, and footsteps approached the door. We fell back instantly, and sought concealment among the evergreens. We listened in breathless expectation — persons stopped before the wicket—a key was applied—the door opened—and, feeble as the light was, several figures were visible in the aperture. One of the party unclosed a lantern suddenly, and we saw three men enter the enclosure. I felt Marianne tremble like an aspen: if she fell or fainted, we were lost,—for the least noise, even a sigh would, from our proximity to the intruders, betray us.

"Lock the door, Brown," said a gruff voice to the last of the party.

"No, no," observed the second fellow; "let Dick return to the bottom of the lane, and keep the coachman company. If he's left alone, he'll get frightened, and be off. He was d—d unwilling to wait, although I swore we would not be away five minutes."

The fellow declined obeying the order of his companion.

" What the devil !" he exclaimed, " am I to turn horse-boy because the fool's afraid ? Not I, 'faith ! let him stay there. I 'll to the house, and get a glass of summut, for I'm blow'd if ever I needed it more."

" Well, lock the door, and move on."

We heard the bolt turned, and the key withdrawn.

" What are you about ?" said the first ruffian. " Leave the key in the lock; it will go astray again—and we shall lose half an hour looking for it, as we did this evening."

The fellow replaced the key.

" Come, brush—let's to the house. The old chap and Sedley will be surprised when they must bundle off so quickly: three hours more would settle their accounts. Who the devil could have peached ?"

" Move on," said the second. " Hold the light down,—the place is so lumbered up with bricks and rubbish, that I nearly broke my leg last night."

Favoured by the stream of light which the

retiring ruffians had thrown upon the path, I watched their progress towards the house, until they turned to cross the garden. This was the moment for escaping. I assisted my alarmed companion to leave the shrubbery, where we had remained *perdus*—unlocked the wicket—stole into the lane—secured the door, and flung the key into an adjacent meadow. We found ourselves in a narrow avenue, enclosed on either side by palings, and a greensward beneath our feet. Were we going right? I paused a moment—but Marianne could not assist me. I was irresolute—a horse snorted at no great distance—we were right. "Come on," I whispered; "life and liberty are ours."

At the bottom of the alley the coach was visible. We approached it silently, and the grass on which we trod enabled me to surprise the driver. I desired my companion in a whisper to stop—stooped—moved on—seized the fellow by the throat—clapped a pistol to his breast, and with a deep imprecation declared that noise or resistance would ensure instant death.

"What do you want?" the coachman muttered.

"Silence and fidelity. Drive my companion and myself to London, safely and quickly;—if you hesitate, I'll blow your brains out."

"I suppose I must obey you," he growled.

"Yes, if you value life at a pin's purchase."

"And am I to lose my night's work? I was promised two guineas by the people that took me off the stand."

"Obey me, and I'll give you five."

"Indeed,—but am I sure of payment?"

"Certain, as of being shot without mercy the moment you attempt to play me false."

"Come, then, I'm ready. There's no refusing a man with a pistol in his hand."

"And three in his belt, which he will use without compunction," I added.

He let fall the carriage steps.

"Marianne, we are waiting," I said softly.

My companion appeared and took her seat; and the driver held the door, expecting me to follow.

"Close it," I said: "you and I, my friend, must occupy the box, until we reach the stones.

Mount! and as you value money and a whole skin, drive your best."

He obeyed—I placed myself beside him, and, quick as a narrow by-way and sudden turnings would permit, he drove for half an hour, until we reached one of the great outlets of the City, which he acquainted me was the Commercial-road.

"Pray, did you know the persons who employed you this evening?" I said to my companion.

"Not I, sir. They promised to pay me well, and I made no inquiries."

"And have you no suspicion who they were?" I rejoined.

The fellow winced.

"Come, answer me."

"Why, dang it! if I must tell truth, maybe I might give a good guess."

"Out with it!"

"Why, body-snatchers—going on the sly for a stiff-un!"

"Wherefore do you suppose so?"

"Why, for three good reasons:—first, from their look,—second, the place they drove to,—

and third, because they came down so handsomely. Where am I to take you, sir?"

"To Berners-street. But stop—I may venture now to turn inside passenger."

"Yes, I guess in the heart of the City there is not much to fear."

I joined Marianne, and we proceeded at a round pace westward.

"Whither shall I conduct you?" I inquired, as I took my preserver's hand. "Will you come to my hotel, and remain there in safety, until suitable apartments can be obtained for you in the morning?"

"No, I will not burden you with farther care. I have an old acquaintance whose residence is not distant, and will stop there to-night. Will you visit me to-morrow, when I am sufficiently collected to converse?"

"All you desire, Marianne, shall be done."

"Tell him to drive to the Adelphi."

I pulled the check-string—named the street and number, and we proceeded.

"We are in the Strand," she said, looking from the window, "and I shall be soon at my

destination. You promise, then, to call upon me in the morning?"

"I will indeed, and shall be very anxious to see you."

"And when you know me better!—O God! what a fate has mine been!"

She sobbed convulsively, and I strove to soothe her—took her hand gently in mine, and placed my arm round her. She shuddered and shrank from me.

"No—no," she muttered; "the arm that once encircled me is cold for ever. I know that yours is the touch of compassion; but even that brings recollections that are maddening."

She alluded probably to Martelli's death, and I respected her feelings too much to wound them by inquiries.

We stopped—the driver knocked at the door, and at Marianne's request announced her by a name I had never heard before. Presently an elderly woman came to the steps, and received her with respect and kindness. I bade her good-night, and turned the horses' heads to Berners-street.

St. Martin's clock was striking nine as we passed by, and in a few minutes I was set down at my hotel.

The porter started as I crossed the hall—and before I gained the drawing-room, I heard my name repeated by several voices in tones which told that my return had caused a strong sensation. William directly appeared with lights—he looked at me and exclaimed, "Good God! Captain Blake, what has happened?"

"Happened, William?"

I turned my eyes to the pier glass. Heavens! what a figure! I might have passed for a bandit or a madman. Pistols belted round my waist—my neck bare—my coat torn, and face and shirt spotted with gouts of blood.

"Hush, William—be silent. Bring water to my room, and send the coachman up."

He bowed—left me—and the driver tapped and was admitted.

I unlocked my writing-case, and handed him a five-pound note. He examined it—looked at me suspiciously, and scratched his head.

"What does the fellow stare at?" I asked.

"'Faith, sir," replied Jehu, "I hardly know

whether I should fob the money. Maybe you intend to pull me up? I won't have it—give me what fare you please."

I smiled. "I mean you no harm, my good fellow. Put the money in your pocket. Five pounds may appear to you an extravagant fare; but I would not have wanted your services this night for five hundred. Take it—come here to-morrow at eleven, and you shall earn an additional guinea."

"Never fear, sir. I beg your honour's pardon for suspecting you; but fecks, I never found the muzzle of a pistol so near my ribs afore—and no wonder that I have felt queerish since. I'll attend ye in the morning at eleven, and no mistake."

He shuffled his feet, made a low bow and his exit.

Before William's return, I had disencumbered myself of everything that bore evidence of the scenes in which I had been so recently engaged,—heard from the attendant how anxiously my friends had inquired for me,—and having made a hasty toilet, set off for Clarges-street.

At my grandfather's a cabinet council was assembled in the drawing-room, for my continued absence had occasioned the gloomiest anticipations;—Emily had retired in tears to her own room—Mr. Harrison was inconsolable—the cynic in despair, and the little colonel himself beginning to despond. Emily had been infected by the general panic, although still ignorant of my mysterious disappearance; but, from Jack's rashness and *mal-adresse*, she feared that I was a party in some unpleasant adventure, if not entangled in a more serious scrape.

"What, Mr. Aylmer, can be done?" the old gentleman inquired despondingly, after numerous projects had been mooted and rejected.

"I know not," replied the cynic, "but make instant application to the head office, and let the police——"

"I hate employing them," said the little colonel, his ruling passion awakened by the name: "they interrupt people in settling honourable dif——"

The old man's temper gave way—a jobation was on his lips, when the knocker pealed—the bell rang—and the street-door opened. Who

could the hasty messenger be? Aylmer sprang up to ascertain; but a quicker ear had caught the sound—a lighter foot anticipated his movements—and when he reached the hall, Emily was locked in my arms, and sobbing on my breast.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HAUNT OF VILLANY BY DAYLIGHT.—ANOTHER CAPTURE.

Poins.—Pray God you have not murdered some of them.
Fal.—Nay, that's past praying for: I have peppered two.
Henry IV.

Never was a man when relating a tale of "most disastrous chances" listened to with deeper sympathy and attention than I; and yet it was singular to observe how very differently my auditors were affected. My grandfather's horror at this miraculous escape from assassination was mingled with deep distress at the exposed villany of his perfidious ward. The cynic's face at times almost displayed a feeling of incredulity,—at others, terror and astonishment. When I described the moment of attack, and the short but sanguinary affair that

followed in the ruffians' parlour, O'Donnel's flashing eyes told the portion of "moving accidents" that interested him most. But Emily, with pale cheeks and "lips apart," heard me in silent wonder—and,

My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs.

"What course is to be pursued, gentlemen?" said Mr. Harrison. "Alas! that the child of him I loved with brotherly regard should have met such untimely end! There is no hope for him. Had he escaped his merited doom, he would most probably have been betrayed and apprehended—and, in that case, an ignominious death have ended a life of sin and shame. What should be done?"

"Drive without delay to the villains' haunt, and exterminate them without mercy, root and branch," exclaimed the short commander.

"No," said the cynic; "a discovery would serve no good purpose, and only wound anew the feelings of our revered friend. Let an *exposé*, if possible, be avoided. If the ruffians have perished by the hand of their intended victim, unless a necessity—which at present does

not exist—should render a disclosure of the affair unavoidable, let their death remain a mystery. That they are dead, is but uncertain: they were promptly succoured by their confederates, and probably removed to a safe retreat, or carried on board the vessel, which it appears was in readiness to convey them from the country. You have nothing to dread from them again. Let us, therefore, remain quiet till to-morrow—then visit the place, and ascertain the ruffians' fate. Indeed we have no alternative—for I suspect, without the assistance of the coachman, we should find it difficult to make out the scene of the late affray."

Aylmer was correct. I was unacquainted with the environs of the City, and consequently should have been a sorry guide to a place selected for concealment, no doubt, from its remote and isolated situation.

From the mental anxiety and bodily fatigue I had so recently undergone, my grandfather and Emily insisted on my retiring early to my hotel. I departed accordingly with my friends—supped at Long's—had a free carouse—and separated with an engagement to meet in Berners-street

at breakfast, and a promise to accompany me to the ruffian abode, that for a time had been my prison, and nearly proved a grave.

To assert that mine were unbroken slumbers, would be absurd. My dreams were "troublous," certainly; but yet I was far more composed than I could have expected to be, after the fearful scenes I had encountered. Men sleep during periods of distressing excitement—felons rest calmly the night before they suffer—Indians, in the interval of torture, have slumbered at the stake:—with me, "sleep fell soft on the hardest bed;" and I never remember to have enjoyed a deeper repose than when I stretched myself beneath a walnut-tree after the fight of Quatre Bras,—or when, harassed and hungry, at the retreat on Mont St. Jean, I couched in my cloak on a sward of wet rye, the night before the field of Waterloo.

My friends were punctual, and before our *déjeûné* was ended, the coachman proved himself "the discreetest of whips," and came lumbering to the door with his "leathern conveniency."

Although we had no reason to suppose that any of the worthy fraternity would still infest

the premises, we took care to go prepared for action—and having given honest Jehu his instructions, drove through the City, and proceeded to the murderers' den.

We had travelled more than a mile beyond the stones, before we diverged from the great thoroughfare into a narrow by-road. Two or three turnings involved us completely in the fields;—a lane, scarcely broad enough in some places for the carriage to pass over in safety, was traversed next. I fancied that I had some remembrance of the locality, and I was right. The driver pulled up in a few minutes—pointed to a green alley, which I clearly recollected—and told me we were at the place where, on the preceding night, I had so very unceremoniously taken forcible possession of his vehicle and person.

It was indeed a solitary spot, to be so near the metropolis of England, and within hearing of St. Paul's clock. After directing our charioteer to wait, I led the way, and, at some fifty paces up the alley, turned into the field, and commenced researches through the grass. I succeeded, and found the iron bar I had thrown away in my retreat, when I thought a more

portable weapon would serve my purpose better. It was in truth a murderous implement, and forged only for an assassin. The striking part was triangular—and to one of its edges, clotted in blood, a grizzled lock adhered. The hair was Martelli's—and little doubt remained but we should find him a corpse.

The short commander examined the weapon with all the precision of a connoisseur.

"'Pon my life!" he exclaimed, "an excellent tool in a *mêlée*, where everything, like a fox-chase, should be short, sharp, and decisive;—the handle judiciously protected with a lapping of whipcord, and a becket, as sailors call it, to secure it to the wrist. We'll take it with us as part of the '*opima spolia*;'" and he laid it carefully aside, while we proceeded to the wicket.

Our suspicions were correct—the parties had absconded—for the door was ajar, and we gained an easy and undisputed entrance.

If at night the garden had appeared neglected, by day its desolation was far more remarkable. The walk that led to the mansion was choked with weeds and portions of the wall, which in many places had given way. The

shrubs — and some of them rare exotics, — were trodden down and withering. The whole look of the place was melancholy and forlorn— and the marvel was how such ruin and abandonment could be found in the immediate vicinity of a great and wealthy city. At the termination of the walk, we halted in front of my late prison,—and a gloomier mansion could never have been imagined by a writer of romance.

It was a large brick building of three stories, with square pilasters of discoloured freestone. Its antiquity was evident, from the heavy framework of the windows, and the form and altitude of the chimneys. Falling rapidly to decay, the roof exhibited sundry breaches; while many of the casements were built up, and others wholly destitute of glass. The remains of a conservatory were distinct—and the garden, stocked with the commonest vegetables, told that it had fallen into the meanest hands. Everywhere there were marks of desertion: some of the offices were down—the porter's lodge almost in ruins—and from the huge crop of dank grass that clung to the iron lattice-work of the gates,

it was quite apparent that for years they had not revolved upon their rusted hinges.

The back of the premises displayed still greater devastation; the stables were roofless—the coach-house fallen. While my companions were moving through the ruins, I was observing other matters. The watch-dog was gone—and the fire-arms that Marianne had carried off, lay in the water-butt, where she had last night thrown them.

One window in the rear of the mansion struck my companions as being remarkable. It had originally been of large size, but was now built up nearly to the top—and small as the remaining aperture was, it was secured by a strong grating of iron bars.

I recognised it at once.

"That," I said, pointing it out to Aylmer—"that was my prison."

"Ay, it has a villanous look, certainly. Come on—let us explore the interior. We have nothing to fear, with daylight, loaded pistols, two heroes, and one coward—meaning myself; and in case of a retreat, if I be driven to the wall, I

may turn desperate, and prove the best man of the three."

"*Nous verrons*—we'll try this door."

We did, and unsuccessfully, for it was secured within.

"Let us assault the front," said the little colonel: "surely where you could manage to get out we shall be certain to get in."

We found the hall-door locked, and just as Marianne had left it; but a lower window was not entirely closed. I approached to raise it—a slight noise within attracted my attention. I listened—groans, or something like them, were audible. O'Donnel and the cynic bent their ears—and smothered sounds, such as proceed from persons in extremity, were heard distinctly. What was to be done?—Break in and relieve the wretch, whether it proved Sedley or Martelli.

We raised the sash, and I forced my way through. I opened the shutters cautiously, and the light streamed in. No murderer was there; —but on the floor, handcuffed, bound to the table, and with a piece of wood secured across his mouth, which prevented him from uttering

any but the low and inarticulate moanings that alarmed us, lay an old man, whose snowy beard and withered features announced him to have nearly reached the longest span of mortal existence.

For a few minutes after we released the captive, he was unable to speak; but gradually he recovered. We removed the apprehensions under which he was labouring on finding himself surrounded by strangers, and by degrees gathered the information I required. I was not, as I had feared, a homicide; and neither of the villains had perished by my hand.

The old man's story was a simple one. We connected a narrative rather wandering and diffuse, and learned the following particulars:—

This deserted house had once been the favourite residence of a gentleman who had amassed a large fortune in the East. On his return to England, although advanced in years, he married —and a son and daughter blessed the union. Their mother died—consequently the cares of infancy devolved upon the widower; and every hope of the retired merchant centred in the orphan children.

They grew up;—the girl was handsome, and the boy exhibited precocious indications of splendid talents. But, alas! both evinced a nervous sensibility truly alarming—for insanity was a hereditary disease, and consequently the adoring parent was rendered miserable from well-grounded apprehension.

Years passed over;—the girl became a woman, and the boy graduated honourably in Oxford. Still the anxious father watched them attentively—and as a frequent change of scene was recommended by the family physician, he resolved to pass the autumn at a fashionable watering-place, and accordingly took up his abode at Sidmouth.

Here, of course, he mixed more generally with the world; and his daughter became acquainted with an Irish officer, whose wounds had obliged him to leave the Peninsula for a time. She loved him—and it was not unobserved. It ended in a proposal; and he was accepted by the girl and rejected by her father. An immediate removal from Sidmouth followed; but it was too late—the mischief was done—her constitutional nervousness was unduly excited—

lunacy supervened—and in a moment of despondency she destroyed herself! The body was found in a pond, since filled up; and from the precautions taken by the unfortunate girl to prevent her dress being displaced, it was too evident that the act was premeditated.

A year passed, and time was abating the merchant's sufferings. Alas! his heart was to be lacerated anew. His son—his only hope, from what cause we did not ascertain, showed symptoms of decided insanity. Every care was taken by the wretched parent to prevent the recurrence of a similar misfortune; and, under the direction of the King's physician, the room that became my prison was prepared for the safe restraint of the unfortunate patient. From the precautions used, it was believed that the poor youth could do himself no bodily injury. These hopes were vain; for, during the temporary absence of his keeper, he contrived to crawl, fettered as he was, to the window,—and when the man returned, the maniac was a corpse, suspended by the slight cord that was used to raise the sash and ventilate the chamber.

The sad scene that had witnessed a double

suicide was abandoned by the wretched father,—the house stripped of furniture, and permitted to fall to decay, for the owner determined never to inhabit it again. To the uses of a worn-out domestic the gardens were appropriated; and, from the unusual solitude of this isolated spot, it was hired by the ruffians as a secure retreat from the myrmidons of the law, and a safe depository for plunder. The old domestic thought it desirable to obtain tenants for the forsaken mansion, and, stimulated by the promise of a trifling rent, he admitted without suspicion the dangerous occupants, who abridged his own liberty, and, but for a chapter of accidents, would have consigned me to the tomb of the Capulets.

It appeared upon farther inquiry, that, disturbed by the carriage of some trunks to a van which the ruffians had drawn up beside a breach in the wall and contiguous to the ruinous gate-house, the old man had rashly intruded on them, while in the act of removing their disabled companions. Martelli, from his report, was nearly dead; while Sedley complained of nothing but a fractured arm. The interruption

would have been fatal to the ancient horticulturist, had not one of the gang, less truculent than the rest, refused to look on, when one so old and helpless should be slaughtered. It was, however, necessary for the general safety, that the intruder should be secured, and the manacles that I had worn, and made others wear, were now transferred to him; and thus in one brief day, the same fetters compressed the limbs of youth, middle age, and senility.

We had now learned all we wanted, and all we wished to know. The scoundrels were on their passage to another land, and I, to my own great satisfaction, had escaped doing the office of the executioner. Our visit to the deserted house had been attended with another cause for congratulation—for timely succour had rescued the old gardener, who otherwise must undoubtedly have perished.

I turned from the haunt of villany, and strove to forget the recent scenes I had gone through. A brilliant future was shadowed out—the brightest dreams of happiness were to be realized. The thunder-cloud had rolled by—the bolt had missed me; and if the perils I escaped

caused me a passing shudder, I had the rapturous prospect to contemplate where beauty and fortune should be mine.

My friends left me at the corner of Norfolk-street, for it was just the time I had named for visiting Marianne. I was admitted—introduced to a neat and well-furnished parlour, and sent up my card. The maid-servant was absent a few minutes, and returned with a pencilled note—

"I am far too ill to see you for a few days. Judge not of my nerves by past events. I am astonished when I think on what I have undergone, and wonder at my own *hardiesse*—or rather call it desperation. When calmer, I will see you—I wish to speak to you—I must have a brief and private interview. Have you heard anything of those wretched men—and what?"

I told her in a few lines the result of our morning visit to the deserted house, and despatched the billet by the maid. A short time brought me a reply—

"Thank God! a load is taken off my heart. Too much blood has flowed for me. Your intelligence rejoices me—and I shall know what I

have not known for months—a day of peace. Leave your address, and you shall hear of me occasionally, until I am able to receive you.—Farewell !"

I returned a short note, asking whether in the mean time there was anything in which I could be serviceable, and delicately inquired how her finances stood. An immediate reply thanked me for my kindness, and assured me that if pecuniary or other assistance were required, there was no one in England to whom she would apply but me.

I gave my address to the servant—left Norfolk-street, and hastened to my grandfather's, to apprise him of the occurrences of the morning, and pay my duty to my affianced bride.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LETTERS TOUCHING LOVE, LAW, AND BUSINESS.

There's a letter for you, sir.

Hamlet.

Shall.—Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pounds?

Evans.—Seven hundred pounds, and possibilities is good gifts.

Merry Wives of Windsor.

Great was the satisfaction of the old gentleman at the intelligence I brought. His feelings would be spared from having the delinquencies of his ruffian ward *eclat*-ed—associated painfully as the affair was with so many unfortunate recollections of his good and valued friend, the father of the worthless outcast. I found his steward had arrived from the country to receive necessary directions for preparing Stainsbury Park for the reception of Emily and me, and as Mr. Harrison would have sufficient occupation

for the morning, I sent for Jack's phaeton, and took out my affianced bride.

In the course of the forenoon we called on the coachmaker in Long-acre,—visited Howel and James,—with divers dress-makers, jewellers, and tradespeople, whose services are indispensable when hymeneals are impending; and finished our drive by an excursion to the picture-gallery at Dulwich. At four o'clock we returned to Clarges-street, and my duty to my mistress being done, I devoted the next hour to the affairs of my kinsman.

It is unnecessary to say that Jack's northern expedition was faithfully chronicled in every print, morning and evening, within the bills of mortality. Much was said of the beauty of the bride,—much also of fortune in her own right, besides her large expectancies. One paper averred that the director was inexorable, and another that he was yearning to embrace the fugitives. From the accuracy of description in which the Morning Post indulged, there must have been a special reporter with a stop-watch upon the box, for the change of horses at York and Carlisle were marked to a second, and the

overturning of a travelling showman most minutely described, although, as it afterwards appeared, the whole account was apocryphal.

Among the parting injunctions delivered to me on the memorable night of his elopement, by Jack the Devil, I was implored by every kindred tie to receive his letters, examine their contents, and give every communication which was important a prompt and suitable reply. My own affairs, unfortunately, had been too hurried and momentous to allow me any leisure to attend to the business of Jack's *bureau*. On my return with Emily from Dulwich, I recollected, for the first time, having been nominated honorary secretary to my absent kinsman, and, strolling down to' Long's, I found there a voluminous correspondence awaiting me.

It was, indeed, a curious literary medley which it was my duty to overlook. The first seals I broke were from a tailor and an attorney. The tailor requested the honour of Jack's custom—the attorney demanded a settlement of account, or regretted that he must take proceedings against him without delay.

The remainder of the correspondence was as

desultory. A horse-dealer recommended him a bay mare. A reduced gentleman begged to be accommodated with the loan of a guinea. There was a threatening letter from an angry brother, whom it pleased to remain anonymous, for winking at his sister in the Park—and a billet from a broken-down actress, hoping he would take a box at her benefit:—all these I consigned to the drawers of my dressing-table; but two epistles of more imposing character, I read with deep attention. One bore the Brighton post-mark, and was from a lady; the address upon the other was the well-remembered hand-writing of my uncle Thomas. Of course, gallantry obliged me to give the former a preference.

The penmanship was very unpretending, and "Sarah Ann Jackson," as the fair writer subscribed herself, differed in orthography from most of the grammarians. But her letter threw a new light upon the variety of Jack the Devil's avocations—and for the first time, and to my unspeakable surprise, I learned that my kinsman was deeply engaged in the tobacco trade!—The letter ran thus:—

" O, you crewel man to lave me in such a predikiment—two mons over, and not the scrape of a pen. Trade all gon—and no money to be got no how — and I that don a snug bisness with most of the Dragoons, h'ant for God knows how long, suplyd them with a pipeful.—You'l wondir when I tel you so—But its all trew I asure ye—When the Lancirs got the rout, in coms the huzards—and what did the doo, but brings down an old lady from Lonon, and sets hir and hir too darters up in the hoposition line rite opasite my door—Well, sinse then, hir shop nevir empys of them—There they are mornin, noon, and night—and no call for me—I cant stand it no longer—rents high and reats heavy —and old Jones swears he woudn't trust us with un ouns of pass-cut, becaus you did not pay the last parcel as cam down."

There was a discovery! Jack a dealer and chapman—a vender of snuff, and a retailer of nigger head! It was probably a co-partnership, " Blake and Jackson" above the door—and within, " Goods payable on delivery," and " No connexion with the shop over the way."

Heavens! if the old Director was aware of his son-in-law's turn for trade, how much the knowledge would delight him!—Or it might be only a sleeping partnership. Ah! — that was more probable.

The epistle proceeded to say, that from the decline of business, Miss Jackson would wave her objections to visiting Ireland, although she admitted, "she felt queerish at laving her dear relashins"—and had also a lively horror of "them men with White feet wot goes about tossin people on hot pitch-forks." There was a passing allusion to what she termed "a plege of affection"—and a jeremiade touching the loss of a "bloo silk pelise, that had cost her three and ten a yard." The conclusion was particularly endearing—she was "his till deth." As customary in feminine epistles, however, the pith lay in the postscript; and there was a nota-bene requesting my kinsman to "wright soon, and not forget a small remitence."

The letter of my uncle Manus was characteristic of the man — straightforward, honest, and unsophisticated.

"Castle Blake, April 23rd.

"DEAR JACK,

"I have so much to tell you, that I don't know which end to begin with.—But I had better tell you of my affair with the coroner, before I come to the death of Mrs. Casey, whom, glory be to God! we interred comfortably last night beside her mother, your grand aunt, in the abbey of Ballintubber.

"Well, as to Clancy's business. It was last Monday week—Father Walsh was reading mass to your mother and the maids, and I was looking at Tony washing Kate Karney's eye with extract of goulard—she is a most unlucky mare, for only the week before she was all but drowned in a marl-hole.—Well, down ran the gate-keeper's wife, as if the devil was at her heels, to say that the coroner was coming and a whole regiment along with him. Of course we shut the doors, and in a few minutes the soldiers appeared at the head of the avenue, and Clancy, the thief of the world! riding before them on the grey pony—Sibby Philbin, the poor creature thought all the army in the province was there, though after all there was only the light company of

the 87th, commanded by a Captain Hamilton, a bosom friend of your cousin John. The soldiers came fair and easy down the road; your mother and the priest remained at prayers, as they ought to do; and I loaded the old double with a handful of swan-drops, and sat down at the lobby window, to see how things would get on.

"When the red coats came to the carriage sweep, Captain Hamilton halted the company, and ordered arms. Clancy dismounted, pulled out an ugly bit of parchment—walked up the steps, as if the house was his own—and mighty stiff he was as he gave a thundering knock at the door, that set all the dogs a-barking.

"'Arrah, what do you want?' says I from the window—'that you knock like a blacksmith.'

"'I want admission,' says he.

"'I'm greatly afraid you're not likely to get it,' says I.

"'You had better give it fair and peaceably,' says he.

"'You're better where you are,' says I, 'and on the right side to run away.'

"'I'll smash the door in a jiffey,' said he.

"'Then, upon my conscience, you'll never smash another,' says I, and I lifted the gun quietly, and opened both pans to see that the primings were good. Clancy stepped back—the soldiers laughed heartily—and the tenants had soon got the alarm, for they came hopping in dozens over the park walls, and in less than no time, there they were like a swarm of bees, and every man a shillelagh in his fist, and the girls with their aprons full of paving-stones.

"Well, Clancy got mortally afraid. 'I hold you, sir,' says he to Captain Hamilton, 'accountable for my safety,—and I command you to break in the door.'

"'I'd see you d——d first,' replied the captain: 'I came here to protect you, certainly; but do you think, you scoundrel, that I shall commit a burglary?'

"'I want you to do your duty,' says the coroner.

"'And that I will,' says the captain. 'I'll bring you safe home if you please it; but do you suppose that I shall turn housebreaker?'

"The tenants gave a cheer—the soldiers a laugh—and Clancy ran into the ranks for protection.

"You may guess that Denis O'Brien had not been idle: he played the old soldier, and rolled a barrel of beer and a keg of poteen round to the front of the house. I requested the captain to refresh his men, as they had had a long walk from Loughrea; but he shook his head, and pointed to the tenants. 'Phew!' says Denis O'Brien; 'I'll settle that in the snapping of a flint,' and in he goes for Father James; and before you could bless yourself, the priest removed them, man, woman, and child, to the Dane's Fort, and there they sat perched upon the top, like a flock of crows in a stubble field.

"You never saw decenter poor fellows than the military. When the tenants disappeared the captain ordered them to pile arms, and refresh themselves. Every man of them drank my health, and the colour sergeant added, 'More power to my elbow.' Clancy would have given his grey pony—and he's a clever cob—to have been safe at home; when lo! the park gates opened, and down galloped the postmaster's son as if the devil—Heaven pardon us! was behind him.

"'Arrah—Corney dear—what a hurry you

are in,' says Denis O'Brien, who was mixing a glass of grog for an old corporal. 'Ballagh!' says he, and he tilted through the soldiers, who very good-naturedly made way for him to pass.

"'It's I that has the beautiful news,' says he; 'there's a letter for you, ye dirty divil!' and he threw one to Clancy, 'and here's another for his honor, if any of ye were long enough to hand it to him.' Instantly a soldier fixed his bayonet—stuck the despatch upon the point—jumped upon the balustrade, and conveyed it safely to my hand.

"I broke it hastily—it was a few lines from Mrs. Casey's confessor, begging me to hurry up—and, for the tender mercies, to make no delay, if I would catch my cousin alive. She left me, it appeared, everything she possessed, and wanted to add her blessing to the bargain.

"The coroner's intelligence was momentous: he demanded a parley, and begged to be admitted 'upon honor.' 'All,' he said, 'was fortunately arranged,' and Sharpe and Sweepall desired him to surcease hostile proceedings immediately.

"'Am I to believe you, Clancy?' says I, 'or is this a stratagem on your part?'

"'If it is,' says he, 'let Captain Hamilton draw off, and lave me to the mercy of the tenants.'

"This was enough: the doors were opened, and in came the captain, his officers, and Mr. Clancy.

"Well, all ended as it ought; the coroner and I were reconciled, and I started by the Galway mail that night for Dublin—stopped at 'the Hibernian,' and when I had made myself decent, set off for Merrion Square.

"I found all there expecting my arrival, and was shown up directly to poor Honor's bedroom. There she lay with the apothecary at her side, propped with a dozen pillows, and blowing—glory be to God!—like a regular roarer, after a sudden burst.

"'Honor,' says I, 'I'm sorry to see you so bad.'

"'Och!—Manus *astore*—it's I that am glad to see you,' replied she: 'my time's short in this world—and I'd like to plaister up any little difference between us.'

"'Honor, have you made your soul yet? for you know one should think at these times of religion.'

"'I have, *agra*,' says she; 'I confessed this morning to Father Shanaghan, and have left fifty pound for masses for myself, and ten for poor dear Jerry Casey, though he's in glory long ago. I'm in a blessed state of mind, Manus,' says she, 'and on my dying bed, I'd take the vestment, it was bad members that put between us—my curse attend them for the same!' — I thought she would have gone off in a passion, for she was always good game.

"'Amen! — Honor,' says I: 'Bad luck to them every day they see a paving-stone, and every day they don't.'

"'Ay — but for these thieves, Manus, you and I would have lived and died together.'

"'It's the attorneys you mean?' says I: 'Don't fret, Honor. You may remember that Jack flogged Sharpe; and if it will ease your last moments, I'll break Sweepall's bones within an hour.'

"'Och! the widow's curse upon them both!' says she; 'but don't mind them, Manus dear —

as I'm dying in peace and charity with all mankind.'

"Well, Jack, after consigning her cats and canaries to your mother's care, settling ten pounds a year upon the parrot, and sending her love to you, poor Honor Casey went off like a decent woman, and a good Catholic. Of course we gave her a good wake, as she deserved, and a finer funeral never entered Ballintubber. After leaving some small annuities to Jerry's poor relations, all she died possessed of is bequeathed to me, in trust to clear off incumbrances, and the surplus to be invested in purchasing lands to be entailed with the Castle Blake property, on the heirs male for ever.

"Come over, Jack, as soon as possible. The Duhallow hounds are to be disposed of; and with a cross of our own, and the Roxborough blood—for Tony managed one way or other to quarter eleven couple among the tenants—with the blessing of God, we'll have as sweet a pack as ever drew a cover, and all ready for work before cub hunting commences next season.

"While they were laying Honor out, I slip-

ped down to Dycer's, as it was sale-day, and was just in time to buy Rasper and Medora. You know the horse; he was poor Mick Brown's favourite—he that was shot by the *whitefeet*, and be d—d to them!—and the mare won the Portumna cup, a four-year old, beating Hawk, Timekeeper, and Tom Payne. I gave a long price for them; but no matter—we're at the sunny side of the hedge now, and that's a comfort.

"Of course Mrs. Casey's death occasioned great pleasure to all our connexion. Tony has never been sober since, and Denis O'Brien was obliged to book himself for a twelvemonth against everything but beer, and whatever spirits he gets out of your mother's hand. Mary Macan, the girl with the black eyes, that you sent the cloak and bonnet to from Dublin, has gone for change of air to her aunt's in Roscommon. The devils in the neighbourhood wanted to make out some story about you; but your mother very properly wouldn't listen to them; for she says she never knew her, from the time she entered the house, break Lent or miss mass.

"Bring over two or three good saddles from

Whippy — Rasper will require a cut-down pommel, and a wide tree. Of course you'll go into mourning—it will be decent, although you never could abide poor Honor. Get me a bust of Sir Francis; they are to be had at some place near Pall-Mall. There's not a man in England I admire so much. Your mother sends her love to you and John. Tell him I'll write to him, and hope to see him soon here; — the oftener he comes, and the longer he stays, the better. Medora would carry him beautifully—she's master of his weight with any dogs that ever ran before their own tails.

"Your affectionate father,

"Manus Blake.

"P.S. I was greatly relieved by your last letter, as from the similarity of rank and name, I was afraid at first, that you might have been the person to whom such frequent allusion was made in the newspapers. Blessed be God! that dancing vagabond has left the country, and poor John intends, you say, to turn a new leaf. You remember the scrape he got into with Miss Lightbody; I hoped that affair would have been

a warning to him. I suppose he has melted all his money, and old *Square-toes* won't give him a rap.—Well, no matter, there 's plenty for us all ; and as long as we have any, he shall never want. I wish you would inquire at the Horse-Guards, and see if we could purchase him on. If he was once a colonel, I would be satisfied. —I was greatly pleased with his behaviour in those fields—what a pity he did not raise his hand an inch or two ! But to level low is the right side to err upon—a neater shot than your uncle Pat never touched a trigger, and I never knew him rise over the hip-bone but once, and that was when he shot Dick Birmingham at the Tuam Election.—You should advise your cousin Jack—he is a fine honest-hearted fellow. Tell him the danger of knowing devils like those opera-women—the curse of Cromwell light upon them one and all ! Your poor mother vowed a station to Ball, when she heard that you had no acquaintance with that foreigner, and that it was John that drilled that Newman or Neville at Dulwich. I 'll send you an order on Coutts' next post. God bless you !

" Yours, M. B."

Wonderful was the fortune that attended the name of Blake! Our star was in the ascendant, and evil influences were overcome. Wealth flowed on us in a steady stream, and even Jack's *diablerie* could not mar the efforts of our better genius. A chance of inheriting from Honor Casey was yesterday as unpromising to my uncle, as ten years since my succeeding to the estates of Stainsbury.—Yet Plutus was not more beneficent than Hymen, for into the lottery of love my cousin and myself had boldly ventured, and both drawn prizes.

CHAPTER XIX.

EMBASSY TO THE DIRECTOR.—A DINNER AND A RECONCILIATION.

Anne Page.—Pardon, good father! good my mother, pardon!

Merry Wives of Windsor.

Page.—Come, gentle Master Slender, come; we stay for you.

Slender.—I'll eat nothing, I thank you, sir.

Page.—By cock and pye, you shall not choose, sir: Come, come.

Ibid.

The last morning of my celibacy dawned,—and by noon to-morrow I should be Benedict the married man. Every preparation for my wedding was completed—Sir Edward Davies and his daughters, near neighbours and intimate acquaintances of Mr. Harrison and Emily, had arrived the preceding evening at Ibbetson's, to accompany us to the altar; and, in a hasty despatch from York, Jack informed me that he

would be in town for dinner, attended by his blooming bride. I was commissioned to provide suitable apartments for him in my own hotel, and farther requested to visit Portland Place and mediate with the Director and his lady. I was implored to use my influence in averting parental wrath and effecting a reconciliation, if possible. Sophia, it would appear, was nearly heart-broken, and nothing was required to make her the happiest of women but pardon for her offending. The old argument for forgiveness was stoutly urged—that the mischief was irremediable, and the old plea of love put forward—and "love would be the lord of all" to the end of the chapter.

On calling at Clarges-street, I found Mr. Harrison in excellent spirits. He had recovered from the agitation my recent disappearance had occasioned, and he evinced sincere pleasure when I acquainted him with the fortunate change that Mrs. Casey's death had made in the prospects of Jack the Devil. Manus Blake's letter amused him exceedingly; and at the allusion to himself under the title of "old Square-toes," he laughed heartily. The simplicity of my poor uncle, in

persuading himself that I had perpetrated Jack's iniquities; and the generous and affectionate feelings exhibited towards me, when under an impression that I was improvident, if not undone, were so characteristic of the man, that it elicited Mr. Harrison's admiration.

"I forgive him from the bottom of my heart," said the old man; "although, had I been silly enough to have afforded him an opportunity, he would have shot me without compunction. Write to him, John:—tell him 'old Square-toes' estimates his worth, and had he life enough to spare, would cultivate his acquaintance. Convey to him this small memorial,' and he drew from his finger an antique gem of some value,—'and when I am gone, ask him to think sometimes with kind remembrance of one whom he once considered to be an enemy. Of course, you will go to Portland Place, and employ your mediation; and doubtless this recent acquisition of property will accelerate a reconciliation.—But what has become of that strange and mysterious female to whom you owe your life? You are bound by every tie of gratitude to provide for

her proper maintenance, and protect her while she lives."

I told him that I had already sought an interview for this purpose; and soon after took my leave till dinner, when I had engaged to meet the baronet and his daughters, and also, at my grandfather's request, to bring Jack and the fair fugitive with me, should they reach town in time.

I sent my servant—who had just rejoined me from France, after obtaining his discharge by purchase from the Rifles—for Jack's drag, and set out for Portland-place on my work of mediation. It was now a subject of regret that I had not availed myself of Sophia's offer, and been presented to her mamma; as, being a stranger, there was some awkwardness in deputing me to open this delicate investigation. I took courage, knocked stoutly, sent up my card, and was admitted to the same room where I had been formerly so instrumental in aiding and counselling the very act of disobedience that I was now come to extenuate. The identity of name and title, and my strong

resemblance to the delinquent, affected Mrs. Moreland; — she began to cry — I to apologise —when, greatly to my relief, an elderly gentleman, with powdered hair, added himself to the party, and was announced as "Mr. Moreland."

In a very short time, I perceived my embassy would terminate successfully. The lady was too devotedly attached to Madame Sophia to hold out; and whatever the honest Director might have felt, when once *Madame Mère* signified intentions of relenting, he would have found it good policy to become of "softer mood." After some discussion, some explanation, and an appeal to maternal love, the decease of Mother Casey, and its consequences, turned the scale; and on my undertaking that Jack should be amenable to all reasonable settlement of his lady's fortune, present and prospective, pardon was graciously vouchsafed.

"And when, sir, may we expect to see them in town?" inquired the Director.

"This very evening," I replied. "Poor Sophia's anxiety to throw herself at your feet could not be restrained; and I have received letters to say they were on the road hither, with

directions to have apartments engaged for them at my hotel."

"It is better," said the lady, "Mr. Moreland, that we receive them here: let them drive at once to Portland-place, Captain Blake, and for the present take up their residence with us."

The Director willingly assented to the proposal of *Madame Mère*, and I, of course, lauded the magnanimity which extended an amnesty to the offenders.

"I will answer for my kinsman's gratitude," I continued. "Jack, madam, will duly estimate this generous kindness. But this is the last day of my bachelor career—to-morrow, like my fortunate cousin, I too shall wear the bonds of Hymen; and my grandfather has requested that the fugitives shall dine with him in Clarges-street, and in the morning accompany me and my bride to the altar. Mrs. Casey's death will, though I should lament to own it, prove an agreeable surprise to my worthy cousin; and might I afford one equally so to the fair lady?"

"Anything Captain Blake pleased," was Mrs. Moreland's gracious reply.

"Then, madam, allow me to come here to

supper—a self-invited guest, and bring two visitors along with me."

"Excellent," said the Director; "and not a word about forgiveness till the offenders are in the house."

"Not a syllable, sir; you may depend upon my discretion. After we leave Berners for Clarges-street, will you permit your servants to transport their baggage hither? I shall direct my fellow to deliver over their goods and chattels, and I pledge my word the first intimation of plenary pardon shall come from your own lips."

We separated on excellent terms—and in proof of a full and family reconciliation, Mr. and Mrs. Moreland graciously assented to my request, and promised to assist to-morrow at my bridal.

From the Director's I drove to St. James's-street, to have my wedding garment fitted duly by Mr. Nugee—inspected the travelling-carriage which had been sent home—gave directions to my servant to pack up—visited the cynic in his own den, and received by his hands a farewell letter from the "best of daughters," my quon-

dam instructress in piquet, expressing her own and her husband's gratitude for what they were pleased to term my liberal and generous assistance. She informed me they would leave for Liverpool next day, and on the third embark in a liner for New York.

From Aylmer's I proceeded to Norfolk-street, and sent up to inquire for Marianne. The maid, as usual, brought me a short billet to the phaeton: it thanked me for my kindness—told me her bodily health was good, and her mental far better than could be expected after witnessing the scenes I knew of.

The morning slipped over—my last day of liberty was hurrying to its close. I drove to the hotel—it was time to dress—and the fugitives were not arrived.

I completed my toilet as six struck. How provoking! I must leave a note for them. I sent for a coach, and commenced writing, but before my vehicle came lumbering to the doors. a carriage with four smoking horses rattled down the street and pulled up. It was the expected party—all "*in statu quo*" as when they started—Jack "large as life," and the bride

beautiful as a houri. I flew down-stairs — received — kissed her, and so forth—and in a dozen words communicated the old gentleman's invitation. Sophia hurried off to dress, and I took Jack to my own dressing-room, where, during the progress of his toilet, I could supply him with such portions of intelligence as I deemed it prudent at the present time to disclose.

To a rapid detail of my imprisonment and escape he listened in speechless astonishment; while an intimation that Mother Casey had shuffled off her mortal coil, occasioned the demolition of the water-bottle.

"Dead!" exclaimed Jack the Devil; "and is Honor fairly sodded?"

"Ay, snug in Ballintubber Abbey; and attended by a string of mourning-coaches that would have done her heart good, could she but have seen the smart turn-out that accompanied her to the resting-place of her progenitors."

"And the old tailor's money, John?" inquired my kinsman, with a mouth half opened and a stare of great anxiety.

"Gone to found an asylum for reduced gentlemen, with a special proviso that you shall have choice of an apartment."

"Confound her memory!" rejoined the affectionate relative.

"Ay—this comes of horsewhipping the attorney."

"No doubt"—said Jack with a sigh—"the cursed scoundrel invented this asylum scheme, and put it into her head, I 'll be sworn."

"Come, Jack—I have better news for you. Auld Clootey sticks to you like a gentleman; every guinea that Jerry gathered up goes to your father eventually—nothing left away but the cats and canaries, with ten pounds a year to the parrot for life only, and a few annuities to half a dozen paupers of the name and lineage of Casey."

"Bravo! John. Go on, my jewel!"

"No, Jack—I must hurry Madame Sophia. The old gentleman will be waiting dinner, and I can chat to you in the coach."

The bride was dressed—the coach in waiting—we embarked, after I had given necessary instructions to my servant for the transfer of the

personal property of the refugees. Jack rapturously communicated the joyful news—and I added that negotiations with the high estates in Portland-place were to be commenced, and under flattering auspices, to-morrow.

"Well, John—any other intelligence from home?—what does the old boy say besides?"

"Why, he has bought two first-rate hunters, —wants three saddles from Whippy, and a bust of Sir Francis Burdett."

"Ah, I like that," said Jack the Devil; "he's getting the kennel up again."

"Ay—and stocking the cellar anew."

"Excellent, John;—anything else?"

"Your mother has promised to perform a station at Ball, in honour not only of your escape from Pauline but of your intended reformation. I suppose, as she is a good Catholic, she'll keep her word."

"Nonsense, man! have done with this folly."

I caught Sophia's eye, and in its mischievous glance I read ample encouragement to tease her liege lord.

"An old friend of yours is unwell."

"Indeed—who is it?"

"Faith—I forget her name. Mary—Mary—Pshaw!—she with the black eyes, to whom you sent the cloak and bonnet."

"What!" exclaimed Sophia—"what 's that about cloaks, bonnets, and black eyes?"

"Nothing, love—some nonsense of John's," replied the culprit.

"I wish it was," I returned drily. "Poor soul! she is seriously indisposed, and gone for change of air to Roscommon."

"Now, John—'Pon my life this is unfair—you know I 'm married."

"Yes, Jack—but surely for all that you must feel interested at the indisposition of a favourite. Was black-eye pretty? She was very amiable by all accounts, as she never broke Lent or missed mass."

Fortunately for Jack the Devil the coach stopped—I handed Sophia out. As she was throwing off her shawl, my kinsman was particularly officious. "Ah, you false, you treacherous man!" said the bride with mischievous gravity, while she pressed my arm as we as-

cended the stairs, and with difficulty kept from laughing at the dolorous look that the bridegroom's face exhibited.

We entered the drawing-room—Mr. Harrison received the fair fugitive with great urbanity—Emily kissed and embraced her new cousin, and all in due course tendered their congratulations.

We found 'a fair assembly' collected upon this festive occasion; and, considering the almost ascetic life the old man generally led, this was on his part an extensive effort at hilarity. Sir Henry Davies and his daughters—the little colonel and the cynic—Jack and his bride—formed the company. Dinner was announced, and we proceeded to the parlour. To me and my friend O'Donnel the table duties were intrusted; while Mr. Harrison placed himself at the side of the board, with the pretty bride beside him.

Everything was as it ought to be—elegant and *recherché;* for my grandfather had employed an *artiste* of great celebrity, and the feast was creditable to a man of talent. The dessert was put down. The little colonel rose,

requested a bumper, and proposed the healths of the bride and bride elect. The old gentleman seconded the short commander warmly, and took that opportunity to present Emily with the family jewels beautifully reset: to the bride he gave a splendid suite of emeralds, and to the bride's-maids for to-morrow valuable necklaces of amethyst and pearls. Soon after, the ladies left us.

"Sir Henry," said the old gentleman, "you can remember when I should have proved a better host: if these soldiers neglect their duties, hold me, I beseech you, harmless. Come, Colonel O'Donnel, we must drink to the bridegroom, and, as Mrs. Page says, pray that

'Heaven may give him many happy days.'"

"Yes," said the short commander, "none need be vainer of his conquest, to judge from the lady's beauty—and every circumstance proves how sincere and disinterested her affection was."

"Talking of good luck, I think that Mother Casey's death was not amiss," said the cynic.

Jack made a very elegant acknowledgment, and sat down.

"And yet," I remarked, "how tangled is the web of fortune! Hymen has smiled upon my kinsman under the dusky guise of a Scotch blacksmith; and dame Fortune bestowed her favours by the decease of the honest dowager—and yet Jack is far from happy, if he would but confess it."

"Why, what the devil do you mean?" exclaimed the bridegroom testily.

"Nothing, my dear fellow, but the pressure of your mercantile embarrassments. The best of men can't guard against them."

"Mercantile embarrassments! Are you mad or drunk? No, no—it's too early for that."

"I am neither—I mean nothing, Jack, but your failure in the tobacco-trade."

"The tobacco-trade!" exclaimed the cynic with a broad stare; while my grandfather's grey eye began to twinkle, as he perceived the point my raillery turned to.

"Yes, Jack—we are all friends, and the thing needs no concealment. The Brighton firm will

be probably in the next gazette, and 'Blake and Jackson' notified on a certain day to surrender at Guildhall, with some solicitor of Old Jewry 'provisional assignee.'"

"By the Lord, John, this is too bad!—I have fired at a man for less."

"I don't question that," said Mr. Harrison drily.

"I merely, Jack, apprise you of the state of affairs. There, Aylmer, peruse that letter, and say if matters are not alarming." I threw him Miss Jackson's epistle, and he read it in an audible voice, and with the greatest gravity.

"Now, Jack," I said, "what between the loss of military custom — the refusal of Mr. Jones to supply short-cut and brown mixture — not to talk of the opposition over the way, what chance have you as a dealer and chapman?"

Jack laughed heartily himself.

"Ah, Mr. Harrison, is not this ungenerous of my kinsman? I trusted him to open letters in my absence, and see the advantage he takes of a misplaced confidence."

"And here, sir," I replied, "read this, the

postscript of his honoured father—judge then between us, and say what he deserves at my hands?"

Jack looked very foolish, as he listened for the first time to the epistle of Manus Blake.

"Here, gentlemen—here am I accommodated with all the credit of my kinsman's notoriety! Fy, Jack, fy!—not only to slander me, your loving cousin, but induce your excellent mother, my good aunt, to scrape her knees round the blessed well of Ball on my account, and that too under false pretences."

"Mr. Harrison, will you protect me? for this merciless relative will have no pity."

The old man smiled.

"Certainly, gallant captain; I must come to your assistance, and the first man who mentions a figurante or tobacco-dealer this night, shall pay the penalty of a full bumper."

The evening passed on agreeably. We joined the ladies in the drawing-room—had coffee, and left Clarges-street at eleven o'clock, after due arrangements had been made by all concerned to meet next morning, proceed to St. George's, and afterwards return to breakfast with my

grandfather; who, from his infirmities, prudently declined to accompany us to church, and delegated to the little colonel the high honour of giving the bride away.

"What think you of your new cousin?" I inquired of the Director's daughter, as we drove from Clarges-street.

"Who can have any opinion but one?" she answered. "She is not only beautiful, but so sweet, so artless, so fascinating!—Heigho! I felt ashamed whenever her eyes met mine—and when she asked me some questions about the madcap expedition, which that scapegrace unhappily persuaded me to undertake, I felt so naughty-looking. Ah! poor Emily—had she a mother so kind as mine, she would not have returned her love with the ingratitude which I did."

"And, dearest Sophia," said Jack dolorously, "am I to infer that you repent the step, and regret your confidence?"

"Umph! I fear not—I have not, alas! grace enough to be a penitent."

I heard a kiss duly given in acknowledgment.

"Lord! we are past the turning," exclaimed

Benedict. "Why, where is the fellow driving to?"

"To set me down where I am engaged to sup. Surely you are not in such a hurry home, that a drive through a couple of streets can be of such material consequence?"

"How easy this chariot is! I never felt but one carriage like it. Heigho! I suppose I shall never enter that one more."

"Where the deuce are your fellows driving, John? Surely that is Langham Church?"

"Good God! I cannot bear to pass my father's," said the bride.

"Shut your eyes then, as children do who fear ghosts and find themselves in the dark."

The carriage stopped—the Director's hall-door flew open—there were the whole establishment in expectation, and the old gentleman, with his powdered head, ready in his proper person to hand out the fugitive.

"Well, you are the boy after all," said Jack the Devil in a whisper, after the first salutation in the hall was over. "You managed this affair inimitably—But, for God's sake, not a syllable more about tobacco."

"I was thinking of naming it to the old fellow," I replied; "he might be induced to take a share — 'Moreland, Blake, and Jackson,'— what a firm!—Hang it! in time you would eclipse Lundy Foot himself."

"Hush! Jack, you 'll make Sophia jealous."

"Ah, poor soul! if every woman had as good cause.—But in with you, man—don't you see the old lady waiting to bestow her benediction!"

Nothing indeed could be more sincere than the reconciliation in Portland-place, and when I left the Director's at midnight, there was not a happier family within the bills of mortality than Mr. Moreland's.

On my return to Berners-street, I found a letter on the table from Marianne, and the hand-writing at once evinced the deep agitation of the person who penned this hurried epistle. It ran thus:—

"Vainly have I endeavoured to nerve myself for an interview, and communicate a portion of my history to the only one on earth whom, as I believe, it could interest—but the task is

too much, and I cannot muster courage. You, who witnessed my self-possession during a scene of slaughter, may smile at this assertion; yet she, who dared a murderer's vengeance to achieve your deliverance, would quail before the eye of him whose life she preserved at the hazard of her own. Blake—these are the last lines I shall address to you! From this hour I am dead to you and to the world—*forgive me* if you can; if you cannot, then *forget me:* when I am gone, some memorial from me will announce the event, and, in the grave, *you* may extend your pity, and *I* find that rest, from which, when living, sin and shame debarred me!"

It was a strange commencement;—who was she? and in what way could I be interested in her history beyond the wish to know something of a person to whom I was indebted for my preservation? She saved, and yet she shrank from me—it was passing strange. I took the letter up, and it thus proceeded:—

"Many years have elapsed since, at the early age of twenty-two, I found myself an heiress and a widow: what my personal attrac-

tions were then, it would now be vanity in me to say; but if man's admiration be the meed of beauty, mine must have been uncommon—for none commanded more general admiration than I. Yet what a wretched career has mine been! Looking in a foreign country for tranquillity unattainable in my own, and with all the advantages that wealth and beauty could bestow, dragging on a miserable existence, and seeking in revelry and dissipation to find

> 'Some sweet oblivious antidote
> To cleanse the bosom of that perilous stuff
> Which weighs upon the heart.'

"How shall I disclose my secret, or trace upon this paper a name which, from childhood, you have been taught to execrate? Dare I judge from your bearing that yours is not a vindictive heart? but even were it so, my offendings, if misery can atone for sin, have been amply expiated. How did you find me—*me*—the once flattered and idolized! But peace, idle memory! —you found me the inmate of a felon's den—the companion of a gang of outcasts.

"I have suffered, but none shall know the

tale. I have been torn from my palmy state—I, whom nobles vied for—I, whom crowds worshipped—for what was I reserved?—To be the victim of a villain—the associate of a gambler—and step by step descending in the scale of infamy, until the crimes of others drove me from society, in reputation as blasted as themselves!

"Blake, you will never hear from me again when living. On the produce of some jewels saved from the total wreck of all I once had, I have secured a safe retreat. When I am at rest, a memorial of my death will reach you, and announce that longed-for consummation. For twenty-two years I have worn the picture of your father, and, when life is parting, I shall send it as a token to his child."

I dropped the letter. Dark suspicions flashed across my mind. After a moment I again resumed its reading, and it was brief.

"Farewell, Blake! Curse me not when the fatal name is written. Remember, that the destroyer of the father was the preserver of the son. Pity, and, if you can, pray for

that guilty being who sends you her eternal farewell!"

The signature was what I had anticipated. Marianne, the outcast's mistress, was once the fascinating Henrietta Rinvan. Lost and fallen woman!

"Her name that was as fresh
As Dian's visage, now begrimed and black!"

CONCLUSION.

Now all the blessings
Of a glad father compass thee about!
The Tempest.

Oh, he is gone indeed!
King Lear.

Never did a lovelier morning break through the dusky atmosphere of London, than that on which I submitted to wear the golden fetters of the god of marriage. Matrimony is a commonplace affair, and mine, I presume, went off in the usual way. I cannot describe the bride's attire, as I do not exactly know the difference between blonde and muslin. The papers asserted that it was fashionable and expensive; and I'll be sworn that it was particularly becoming. There was no scene at the altar—one or two fugitive tears—but not an attempt at hysterics; in truth, Emily's love was so fixed

and confiding, that she had no doubtings to overcome or fears to vanquish; and as to me, I replied to the parson's interrogatories in as firm a voice as if I were relieving the Castle-guard in Dublin. The bride's-maids were exceedingly pretty—the Cynic looked as if he had half determined to think better of the world—while the short commander sported his Portuguese order and Waterloo riband "for the nonce," and, I verily believe, estimated the honour of giving Emily away almost as highly as if employed in carrying a message to a field-marshal. One sigh escaped—I turned round—it was Sophia's.

"I was just thinking," she said, "but for that graceless villain who is flirting so busily with the bride's-maids," and she pointed to her own liege lord, "that I too might have been married in a Christian way, instead of scampering across the kingdom, hurry-scurry, at the mercy of dark nights and postilions, who one moment were threatened with immediate death, and the next stimulated by the promise of a guinea."

"How devilish well Jack looks to-day!" I replied carelessly.

"Does he not?" and her eyes sparkled. "Heigh-ho! if the thing were to do again, I am half afraid I should not have grace enough to say *No!*"

"Do not, dear Sophia, have a doubt upon the question: you would be ready for the road a good hour before the time that Jack required you."

"Go, you vile slanderer! Why is there not an act of Parliament to protect weak women, and keep those nuisances, your countrymen, at home?"

We left town directly after breakfast, and approached Stainsbury as evening was closing in. How different were my feelings now from those I had experienced lately, while making my experimental visit to the old man. Bonfires were blazing in the streets—the bells from the old tower rang out their merry welcome—I entered the park-gates as lord of all around, and—happier boast—as the husband of Emily Clifden. Phœbe, the tried *confidante* of the father—the faithful ally of the son, was waiting on the steps to receive us; and I, who but one short month

ago, could not have counted on a civil reception, returned to Stainsbury Hall its master!

Months rolled on. A letter came to me from New York—it was from my first flame, Lucinda Daly, announcing that her husband was a reformed, and, as she trusted, would eventually become a prosperous man. She further mentioned, that the vessel in which Sedley and his vile companions had embarked, had been run down in a gale of wind by a whale-ship, and not a soul was saved. About the same time, a packet reached me containing my father's miniature. I understood its import well—she who had sinned and suffered so deeply was no more—and, Charity would hope, reposed in that place where the weary are at rest.

From Jack and "my cousin his bedfellow," I heard frequently. They had visited Ireland soon after their marriage, and the lady was in raptures with the ardent and flattering reception she had experienced. She described my kinsman as a pattern for husbands generally. He had, she informed me, bestowed his aversion upon the opera and all connected with it, and

no inducement could persuade him to enter into the tobacco-trade again. From Jack the Devil I learned that the cloud which for a season had obscured the fortunes of our house, had melted into glorious sunshine. The castle was filled with visitors—Manus Blake more hospitable—and my aunt, if possible, more holy. The pack was acknowledged to be the best in Connaught—they would go the pace, and you could cover them with a carpet. In the stables were sundry celebrated weight-carriers, whom he duly enumerated; all in top condition, and as fine fencers as ever took a sinner over a six-feet wall.

Months rolled on—a new era in my history opened—Emily, after a fortunate confinement, made me a father, and blessed me with a boy—and Mr. Harrison declared that his cup of happiness was filled almost to overflowing.

Stainsbury Park was now a scene of festivity. The tenantry were feasted on the lawn, and the house filled with all the beauty and fashion in the vicinity, to witness the naming of the heir. Jack and Sophia were present, the lady having returned to London previously to her expected *accouchement*. Aylmer had come special from

Wales, and, from his unwonted urbanity, appeared infected with the general joy. The little colonel was in high feather, having just landed from Ostend, after managing a delicate and complicated affair of honour with his usual tact, and bringing his friend, Lord Edward Delamore, out of an awkward *escapade* with great *éclat*.

The ceremony was over—feasting and hilarity succeeded—evening came, and at his customary hour Mr. Harrison bade his numerous guests "Good night." He paused for a moment at the door—pressed Emily fondly to his heart, and, as he laid his hand upon my arm, implored Heaven's blessing on us both, and prayed that we might be happy as our union had rendered him. There was an unusual degree of tenderness and solemnity in his manner, and we felt glad when he retired with his servant, as the scene was almost painful.

I was dressed when Robert tapped at the door to tell me how the old man had rested. He was not yet awake, although it was long past the usual hour; but possibly he might have been restless from the agitation of the recent ceremony;—likely he would be awake now;

and I accompanied the attendant to pay my morning duty.

All within the chamber was still—and, while Robert unclosed the shutters, I opened the curtains, and looked at my grandfather. How soundly he slept! Was it not strange that the light did not awake him? It was a pity to disturb him—his slumbers were placid, for a smile played over his pale features. Was this sleep? I touched the hand that was resting on the pillow—it was cold—cold as marble! He had slumbered existence away—and Mr. Harrison was dead!

THE END.

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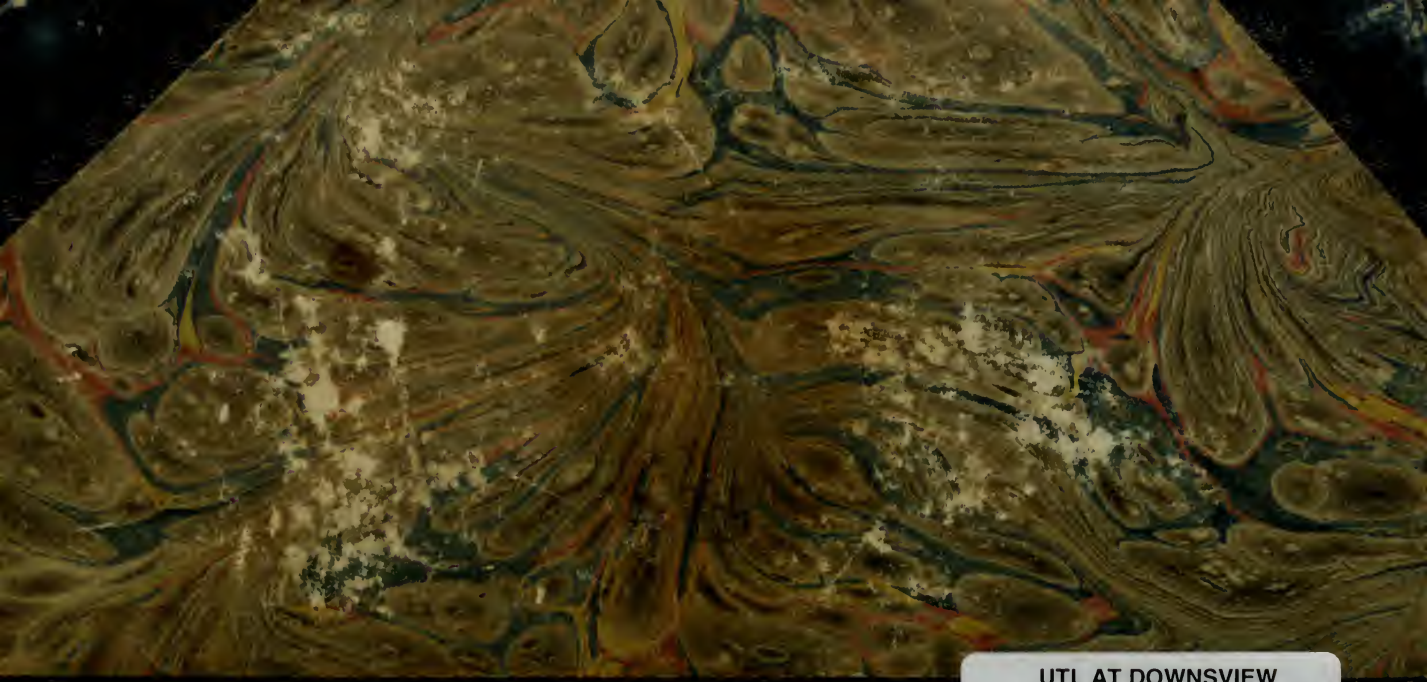
Maxwell, William Hamilton
My life



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